Th. Sect.

A HISTORICAL SKETCH

of

ORGANISED EFFORT ON BEHALF OF THE BLIND

in

GREAT BRITAIN

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CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

Chapter I

It is sometimes said that sight is an anticipatory sense of touch. It thus enables man to ward off approaching dangers and assists him in satisfying his elemental needs. Conversely lack of sight reduces man at once to helplessness and dependence. At the same time the deprivation is so arresting that a full measure of human sympathy has always gone out to those who suffer from it. It is this unhappy conjunction of weakness and appeal that has brought about the equally unfortunate association of blindness with mendicancy. In primitive society and sometimes in societies not so primitive, the blind beggar was and is the typical blind man. Inevitably there were exceptions. Here and there intellect and force of personality would overcome all handicaps and a blind man would win place and reputation. Occasionally a man who was already filling a conspicuous niche would be deprived of sight and, refusing "to bate one jot" would continue to render brilliant service to his kind. Such an one was John Ziska, the fifteenth century Bohemian patriot who in mid career, rose from the bed to which he had been carried blinded and returned to the head of his troops. There is no barrier to such indomitable fortitude and it is not surprising to read of desperate victories which the blind commander wrung from his encircling enemies until at last his country stood united and free. Everyone will remember, too, that the coat-of-arms of the Prince of Wales was taken from the blind King who fell at Crecy.

Still more interesting are those who, though lacking sight from early years have kept their names from oblivion. Diodorus the teacher of Cicero and Didymus the teacher of St.Jerome were both of this class as was also Ludovico Scapinelli, Professor of Eloquence at Modena. Another Italian Blaise de Pagan was an authority on fortifications and mathematics, while in Great Britain the names of Nicholas Saunderson and Thomas Blacklock add lustre to the roll call of the blind.

Saunderson, who was born in 1682, lost his sight in infancy from smallpox. He was sent to a School for ordinary children at Pennistone in Yorkshire and made remarkable progress, particularly in the Classics. His bent for mathematics was discovered later and when still a young man he set up as a tutor in Cambridge. On the Professorship of Mathematics falling vacant Saunderson was appointed and till his death in 1739 filled the post with distinction. For his own studies he invented a tangible method of working arithmetic and geometry which proved the starting point for subsequent inventions.

Blacklock's abilities lay in a more literary direction. He was born in Annan in 1721 and like Saunderson became blind in infancy. Like Saunderson, too, he was educated at a grammar school and shewed much aptitude and talent. He studied Divinity, and for a short time had charge of the Parish Church of Kirkcudbright. He then turned schoolmaster and wrote

verses which gained him the friendship of Robert Burns. He was keenly interested in the education of the blind and by his example undoubtedly made easier the founding of the Edinburgh Institution.

Two more eighteenth century figures call for mention. These are Weissenburg who was born in Mannheim in 1756 and Maria Theresa Paradis, born in Vienna in 1759. Both were of exceptional ability and won European reputations. Weissenburg was fortunate in having a clever tutor who invented or adapted apparatus for mathematics and geography which not only served their immediate purpose but had an influence on future developments. Fraulein Paradis was a gifted musician singing and playing to the admiration of all.

Outstanding instances of what can be achieved by human will in its struggle against untoward circumstances never fail in their appeal yet it must be admitted that Saunderson, Weissenburg and the rest have little place in the story of organised effort on behalf of the blind. Indeed, such cases are of service to the historian mainly for the way in which, by contrast, they reveal the sad condition of the normal. The ordinary blind person of pre-nineteenth century days has left no record. It must be repeated that from the very nature of things, he was a derelict, eddying about life on the charity of his relatives and the public. His education was an informal affair, picked up in the hard school of the streets. His ideal did not rise above the level of expediency. His virtues were those qualities which contributed most to success, as success

was reckoned in the sordid existence of the parasite. It is little wonder that long before there had dawned on men's minds the idea of educating the blind to take an active part in the general interests of the community, the simpler plan of removing them altogether from the unfair competition of life had many times won its way with the tender-hearted. St.Basil, according to Miss E.R. Scott "established a Hospital for the blind at Caesarea in Cappadocia, in the fourth century. In the fifth century the hermit St.Lymnaeus established a refuge for them in Syria and two centuries later St.Bernard, the Bishop of Le Maus, founded an Institution for the Blind."

Paris has the distinction of possessing an Asylum so ancient that its origins are still obscure. It was formerly thought that L'Hôpital des Quinze-Vingts had been founded by Louis IX as a refuge for three hundred blinded Crusaders, but it is now clear that the Institution is older than Louis himself who rebuilt it in 1260. No industries were followed and time must have hung heavy on the hands of the inmates, yet it is probable that life was as pleasant as its aimlessness would permit and that the Hostel had usually within its walls energetic spirits whose activity surprised the casual visitor. Such at least is the reasonable deduction from the following page of Montesquieu's Persian Letters written in 1721. The correspondent is supposed to be a Persian enjoying a European tour.

"I went the other day to look through a house where a

meagre provision is made for some three hundred people. I was not long about it; for the church and buildings do not deserve much attention. Those who live in this establishment were quite cheerful; many of them played at cards, or other games of which I knew nothing. As I left, one of the residents left also; and having heard me ask the way to the Marais, the remotest district of Paris, "I am going there," said he, "and will conduct you; follow me." He guided me wonderfully, steered me through the crowds, and protected me dexterously from carriages and coaches. We had almost arrived, when curiosity got the better of me. "My good friend," I said, "may I not know who you are?" "I am blind, sir," he answered. "What!" I cried; "blind? Then why did you not ask the good fellow who was playing at cards with you to be our guide?" "He is blind, too," was the answer: "for four hundred years there have been three hundred blind folks in the house where you met me. But I must leave you. There is the street you want. I am going with the crowd into that church, where, I promise you, people will be less in my way than I will be in theirs."

The picture is a lively one and yet such Asylums were but a palliative and to some extent an evasion of the real problem. It was towards the end of the eighteenth century that organised endeavour for the education of the blind had its beginning. It was a momentous step. By it a new order of life was revealed. The blind of all succeeding generations

are the heirs of the heroic pioneer who took that step. This was Valentin Hauy who in 1784 established in Paris the first School ever known for blind children. His efforts gained the tribute of imitation. The appeal of the blind when made to the public met with a generous response and by the middle of the nineteenth century twenty Institutions had been opened in the British Isles alone.

In this Country the work was continued for many years on a purely voluntary basis. Then in the third quarter of the century assistance from the Guardians of the Poor was occasionally obtained by Institutions towards the cost of the maintenance and training of industrial pupils. This was the only form of subvention from public funds till in 1890 and 1893 the education of blind children was accepted by the community as a public duty. The Acts of these years introduced the factors of centralised control and of contributions from Education Authorities and so inaugurated a new phase. Another generation had to pass away before the last great forward step was taken and centralised control with financial assistance from Local Authorities came into play in connection with the problems of the adult blind.

It is a story of much interest, a record of unselfish labours, of hopes and aspirations, of controversies not always without reproach, but above all and hallowing all, of ardent desire on the part of a multitude of self-sacrificing men and women to bring into the lives of the blind happiness and self-

respect in place of age-long apathy and despair.

As the first educational Institution for the Blind in existence the Paris School calls for special attention and no apology is offered for retailing its origins and the fortunes of its early years. Its founder, Valentin Hauy, was born in Picardy in 1745. He came to Paris and worked as a subordinate official in the Foreign Office. The incident which turned his thoughts in the direction of his real life's work has often been quoted, but is worth recounting. On one of the Boulevards near a fashionable cafe where the townsfolk thronged of an evening a dozen blind men grotesquely attired and with paste board spectacles on their noses "were placed along a desk which sustained instruments of music where they executed a discordant symphony and gave delight to their audience." Such a scene would be revolting to modern sensibilities as it was to Hauy's, but after all it may be taken as showing a gradual advance from barbarism when compared with incidents of an earlier age. The following episode, for instance, from the annals of the fifteenth century may be presumed to be characteristic of the taste of that boisterous period. "In August, 1425, four blind men covered with armour and armed with staves were shut up in the lists of the Hotel d'Armagnac with a pig of great size, which was to be the prize of the man who should kill it. When the contest began, the poor blind men, pursuing the pig and striking at random, gave one another such rude blows, to the great delight of the lookers-on, that they grew angry; for when they

Valentin Haüy

were most confident of hitting the pig, they hit one another; and if they had not been covered with armour, they would in truth have slain each other."

Hauy had his thoughts turned to the education of the Blind in 1783 and began his experiments with a boy named Francois le Sueur. This lad had become blind at the age of six weeks and at the age of seventeen years when Hauy first met him was contributing to the family income by begging at the door of the Church of St.Germain des Prés. In a few months Hauy took his pupil to a meeting of the Academy and read to that learned assembly a paper on the education of the blind. His project was well received and a number of the members supported him in a more general experiment. A philanthropic society was already in touch with a few blind children to whom it distributed monthly gratuities and these young pensioners formed Hauy's first class. He had carefully studied methods that had been employed by individual blind people of his own and previous times and had adopted all that seemed to him of service. Thus when the Academy of Sciences reported on his enterprise in 1785, just a year after L'Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles had been established in the Rue Notre Dames des Victoires, they demonstrated their own erudition by pointing out the various directions in which Hauy had benefited by his predecessors. They exhorted him to proceed, however, and condescendingly professed their willingness to receive from him further accounts of his success. In the same year

he was summoned to appear with his pupils before the Court at Versailles. It was a time when philanthropic enterprises of various kinds became successively fashionable and for a few years The Institution for Blind Children enjoyed this fickle fortune. According to its founder, learned societies competed for the satisfaction of seeing among them "young blind children lisp out the first elements of reading or of calculation."

In 1786 there were thirty pupils in the Institution and the charitable public rallied to its support. Unfortunately dark days were at hand and in the turmoil of the Revolution the call of a school for the blind sounded faint and far off in the ears of people grimly occupied with matters of vital import to themselves. In 1801 the First Consul decreed that the pupils should be moved to the Paris Blind Asylum. This was the Hôpital des Quinze-Vingts of which mention has already been made. It was a disastrous change for the lively youngsters of Hauy's School. Education languished in the new environment. Governments have a liking for methodical paper arrangements and Napoleon's bureaucrat, whoever he was, had probably no more malevolence in his composition than have the pundits of Whitehall to-day who breezily group together the blind, the deaf and the mentally defective. In the following year Hauy was thanked for his past services and turned out of office. For a year or two he ran a private school for the blind and then spent eleven years in Petersburg returning to Paris in 1817. For most of this time his blind protegés and their successors idled in the Quinze-Vingts, but in 1815 L'Institution

des Jeunes Aveugles was again separated and set upon its feel with Dr. Guillie at its head. "To his energy and devotion" says Miss Scott, "the reorganised Institute owed its almost instant success. Not only did he obtain new instructional apparatus, and new type for printing embossed books and music, but he left no stone unturned to teach his pupils every possible handicraft. They learnt spinning, weaving, knitting, chair-caning, rope-making, shoe-making and harness-making." Unfortunately Dr. Guillie was not successful in making his pupils self-supporting when they left the Institution. In 1833 Dr. Howe the pioneer of work among the Blind in America and first Principal of Perkins' Institution, in Boston, Massachusetts, made a tour of the European Schools and came to the conclusion that though the Paris School was a showy one and the children happy and well cared for, the system itself was a failure in that not more than one in twenty were able to support themselves on leaving.

A better state of things was brought about between the years 1830 and 1840 by the introduction of piano-tuning as a profession for the blind. Thereafter the School specialised in training for this occupation to the exclusion of other handicrafts and by its proportion of successes roused the admiration of Dr. Armitage a generation later.

As piano-tuning is now one of the most widespread and desirable callings for those blind who have an ear for music the manner of its adoption is not without interest. Claude Montal was a pupil at the Institution and with a fellow student

got himself into trouble for tampering with the action of the School piano. In spite of this discouraging start he and his friend obtained permission to buy the wreck of an instrument and keep it in the Institution. This they studied carefully and at length were able to restore it to playable condition. Montal afterwards became one of the best known tuners in Paris.

It may be of interest to note that in Paris the experiment was tried of teaching blind and seeing pupils together. The same was done at Worcester College in its early days and in recent years there has been in America a revival of the idea.

Before the end of the eighteenth century four British Institutions had followed in the wake of the Jeunes Aveugles and before 1850 sixteen more had been added to the list. Although a certain similarity runs through their records they are yet so distinct and individual that a few lines must be devoted to each.

The first was founded in Liverpool in 1791. Edward Rushton is a more than usually picturesque figure in the staid annals of blind education. He was a sea-faring man of forceful personality, unselfish and courageous. While serving on board a slaver he lost his sight through ophthalmia. The epidemic had broken out among the blacks and Rushton is said to have laboured heriocally and to his own privation in the attempt to mitigate the sufferings of the ship's unhappy cargo. Later in life Rushton partially regained his sight, but his sojourn in darkness turned his thoughts to those who were in like case

with himself and stimulated an active desire to relieve their distress. Before any steps were taken towards the founding of a Society, he received advice and assistance from a Mr. John Christie and on his suggestion his idea of a Benefit Club was enlarged and it was decided that instruction in music should also be given.

The resultant Institution began in two houses knocked into one and after a removal to a second address where the accommodation for resident pupils was considerably larger, it was transferred in 1851 to the present building in Hardman Street. Very early in its history basket, mat and mattress making were added to the occupations taught. The pupils were expected to leave at the conclusion of their training and turn that training to use in their own homes.

In 1793 two more Institutions were founded, one in Edinburgh and one in Bristol. The Edinburgh Asylum was for young people and adults and aimed mainly at industrial training and employment. Its founder was an energetic divine of Leith called David Johnston and its exact title was <u>The Society for the Relief of the Indigent Blind</u>. In a couple of months workshops were opened and the title was changed to that of <u>The Asylum for the Industrious Blind</u>. In 1825 a Home for blind women was opened under the same management. Education was not neglected but the authorities had no faith in embossed literature or its place in the training of the young blind. At the same time, Edinburgh was the scene of James Gall's lifelong efforts

to make the blind a literate section of the community. The strong divergence of opinion between the Asylum and Mr. Gall led to the founding, in 1833, of an independent establishment for the teaching of blind children to read. This venture which began modestly with one blind teacher and one pupil soon grew to respectable proportions. In 1876 when amalgamation of the two Charities took place, the women from their Home and the children from their quarters in Gayfield Square were transferred to handsome new buildings in Craigmillar Park. The inauguration was carried out with an amount of military pomp and civic circumstance never known before or since in the world of the blind.

The Bristol Institution was founded by two members of the Society of Friends and began with four boys and two girls who were to be trained in industrial occupations and later given employment. Plaiting ~~s~~hips and spinning flax were experimented with, but before long the more usual trade of basket making became the staple occupation of the Institution. To begin with the pupils attended daily, but in 1803 accommodation was provided for resident girls and later on for resident boys. The Institution grew rapidly in size and importance until within forty years of its founding it was worthily established in Lower Queen's Road where residence and instruction were provided for nearly one hundred pupils as well as employment for the workers.

The last British Institution to claim birth in the eighteenth century was the School for the Indigent Blind of

St.George's, Southwark, which was founded in 1799. Fifteen blind persons were to be "educated, maintained and taught a trade." The site of the first school was soon claimed for the building of the Bethlehem Hospital and premises facing St.George's Circus were taken. These were greatly extended on more than one occasion and were at last sold to the Baker Street and Waterloo Railway in 1901. In 1827 the number of resident pupils had risen to 55 boys and the same number of girls, a total which was later increased to 150. In 1826 mat-making was introduced as a new industry for the blind and has since that date proved one of the chief trades followed by the Institution. Six years was the period fixed as the duration of a pupil's stay and it was not till 1874 that workshops were set up in part of the basement for those whose training was completed. Some light is thrown on the system of training in vogue from the following report which appeared in the same year. "Mental and industrial training" it states, "commence together (at the age of 10). After the first year more time is given to the latter than to the former and after the fourth year, if fair progress has been made in the schoolroom, almost the whole time is devoted to industrial pursuits."

In 1880 a separate department for elementary pupils was opened at Linden Lodge, Wandsworth Common. This was continued for twenty-one years when the responsibility for this branch of work was handed over to the London School Board. In 1826 the School was incorporated under Royal Charter and in 1911 it

was allowed to prefix "Royal" to its title. In 1902 the School was moved to a fine new building in Leatherhead. Pupils are received there at the age of 16 and remain till the end of their industrial training. Employment is provided in a branch of the Institution known as the Blind Employment Factory, situated in Waterloo Road not far from the original home of the Institution.

It would be tedious to recount the origins of all the British Institutions which were founded in the next half century and yet such information is useful and indeed necessary if a complete view is to be obtained. Particulars of these foundations have therefore been collected and will be found in the first Appendix to this volume. A note has also been added on the early schools of America and the Continent of Europe.

A survey of these early Institutions shews that they can be classified as variations within a common species. The majority provided elementary and industrial training. Some gave employment to a varying proportion of those whom they had trained while others offered to a few of the older blind an Asylum where they, while partly self-supporting, might rest secure from the buffetings of the world.

It cannot fail to have been noticed that the work was of necessity local and sporadic. Each Institution provided for as many children or adults as its funds permitted. Each had a certain number of places. The fortunate secured them. For the unfortunate there was no provision. The time was not ripe for any comprehensive treatment of the problem as a whole. Machinery

for dealing with it on a national basis was to come but only at a much later date.

CHAPTER II

COMPARISONS

Chapter II

Few descriptions are to be found of the educational life that went on in these early foundations. Annual Reports and accounts of ceremonial proceedings can be had in plenty but these are full dress affairs and lack the personal touch of more intimate records. What a stroke of fortune it would have been to the chronicler if a hero or heroine of one of the detail loving novelists of the day had spent a few years in such a setting. Nothing so simple and straightforward is to be found however and side-lights and casual references must be called upon to supplement and humanise the rather pompous official documents of the time.

In its general attitude to education and, more indirectly, in its particular methods, the School reflects the world outside. The general attitude to life of the average man of to-day is different from that of his grandfather. For better or for worse, duty, dogma, providence and responsibility had much more definite and binding connotations to the early nineteenth century than to the early twentieth. They meant more and meant it with deeper assurance and command. The School could not but feel their influence. The well-disposed of that time believed, too, in charity and devoutness. Committee-men and managers took an interest in the inmost being of their charges which to-day sounds morbid and impertinent. Just as in the fifteenth century the motive which led Colombus to voyage forth on uncharted seas was not so much to add a new continent to the realms of the

King of Spain, as to bring fresh tribes and races into the fold of the Catholic Church, so in the nineteenth the pioneers of blind education felt it to be their chief concern to "save souls for Christ."

Reading was taught that the Bible might be studied and that the blind, by this means, might be led from theological darkness into light. The following paragraphs come from the year 1848. "M.-R.- a day scholar, having rapidly learned to read, afterwards carried home with her the embossed Scriptures, and the inspired word, read by the blind child to her parents, produced in them a religious change, manifest and decided in its character." "S.-R.- a blind Irish girl, suffering from great delicacy of health, was received into the School two years prior to her death, under peculiarly providential circumstances. It was deeply interesting to her Christian friends to remark how gradually she was led from the errors of Romanism to the pure doctrines of the word of God, by a blessing on the power she acquired, to search the scriptures for herself." "There is no more vile abortionist" says Bernard Shaw, "than he who would mould the mind of a child" and though no teacher can take Mr. Shaw seriously as an educationalist his hyperbole shews the direction in which modern thought is tending. A hundred years ago the young mind was regarded as plastic clay on which the instructor was ever keen to set the impress of his thumb. Nowadays more respect is felt for the child's individuality. The age of authority has passed and

liberty for the young idea is the order of the day.

The extent to which reading was practised by the blind before the introduction of Braille is probably exaggerated by the apologists of the various types for in spite of their zeal it can be gathered from contemporary accounts that oral instruction by the teacher and the memorising abilities of the pupils played the most important part in their education. The Report of one School for 1843 gives "as a proof of the docility and industry of the adult inmates who are instructed in music, the fact that they have voluntarily committed to memory the whole of the Psalms contained in the Book of Common Prayer. This they have done in a shorter space of time, so far as the Board are aware, than has been done in any similar Institution." Many quotations of a similar nature could be given from the records of other Schools for the same period.

Religious instruction and the reading of the Scriptures were the leading subjects of the curriculum, but very soon they were supplemented by others. The following paragraphs which were written in 1851 in respect of one School may be taken as having a more general application. "The first and most anxious desire [of the management] is to promote the spiritual welfare of their pupils by a system of careful religious instruction; but they are not insensible to the advantages arising, even to this object, by the mental training and general development of the faculties produced by a sound education. While, therefore, the Word of God has been made

the basis of all else, the attention of our Committee and of their officers is by no means limited to this single object, but extends to all the branches of a sound education.

By means of an apparatus prepared for this purpose, a sound knowledge of arithmetic is conveyed, not merely dependent upon mental calculation, but worked out in practice by the same manner as by a person possessed of sight. The first four rules are known to the majority of the pupils, and some of them have advanced as far as decimal fractions.

By means of raised maps, in which the principal cities, rivers, and seas are made perceptible to the touch, the interesting stores of geography are communicated to nearly the same extent as these would be taught in an efficient School for seeing children of the same class.

By another ingenious apparatus they are enabled to communicate their thoughts in writing. Two methods are adopted for the accomplishment of this - one which makes them acquainted, by means of raised copies, with the ordinary English letters, which can, however, only be deciphered by persons having sight; no great dexterity can be acquired in this way, but sufficient for all purposes of ordinary communication. The other is more especially adapted for the written intercourse of the Blind with the Blind, being carried out by means of raised characters."

In the prospectus of an Edinburgh Dame School intended for blind children "belonging to the upper classes of Society" published in 1837 it is stated that the pupils will learn

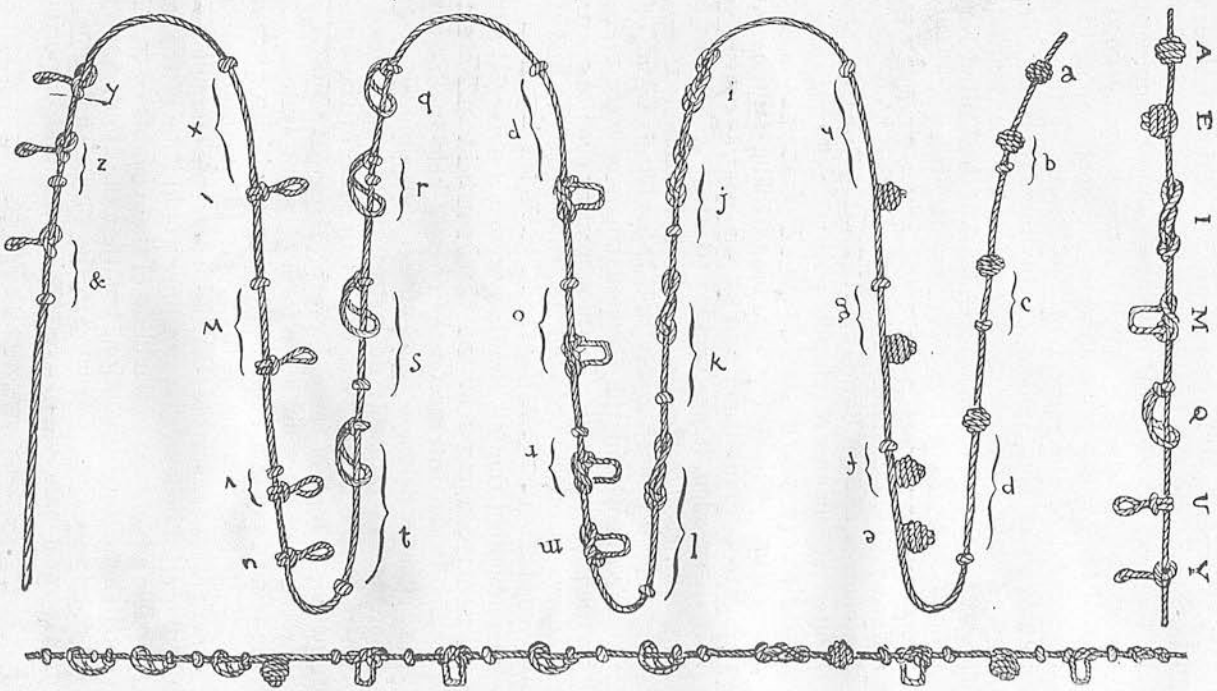
reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, bookkeeping, algebra, geometry, geography, history, philosophy, languages and music, according to their age and capacity. The twentieth century will find it hard to go one better than this.

As a contrast, take a more convincing statement of a pupil's life in the Glasgow Asylum in 1838. "The boys from ten to sixteen years of age reside in the establishment and during the time they are not attending their Classes (sufficient time for recreation being allowed) they are employed in making nets for wall-trees, sewing sacks and such work as they are found capable of doing till their education is finished and they have attained sufficient strength to be put to regular trades in the Asylum." This throws light on the internal economy of the Institution and also reveals an attitude to education which although it may still be common, no longer prevails in the minds of the Alstons of to-day. Education was the attainment of a certain degree of tactual acuteness and the acquisition of a certain quantum of information - the names of the Kings of Israel, the lengths of the chief rivers of the globe and several other categories of facts all equally unconnected with the growing and developing nature of the boys.

Apart from the various systems of embossed type which will demand fuller consideration there are a few pieces of School apparatus which may be noticed here. One of the most ingenious methods of conveying information without word of

mouth was the string alphabet. The idea of a string alphabet is said by Dr. Armitage to have come from Peru and by Miss Scott to have been an importation from Mexico but with regard to the alphabet actually used in Britain its origin is attributed by contemporary writers to David Macbeath and Robert Miller of Edinburgh. It is difficult to believe that this invention was ever anything more than a curiosity, but assurances are solemnly given that it was regularly used in several schools and Alston gives a full and clear description of its convolutions which, in the interests of archaeology is deserving of reproduction. "The string alphabet is formed by so knotting a cord that the protuberances made upon it may be qualified by their shape, size, and situation, for signifying the elements of language. The letters of this alphabet are distributed into seven classes,which are distinguished by certain knots or other marks; each class comprehends four letters, except the last, which comprehends but two. The first, or A class, is dintinguished by a large round knot; the second, or E class, by a knot projecting from the line; the third, or I class, by the series of links vulgarly called the "drummer's-plait"; the fourth, or M class, by a simple noose; the fifth, or Q class, by a noose with a line drawn through it; the sixth, or U class, by a twisted noose. The first letter of each class is denoted by the simple characteristic of its respective class; the second by the characteristic, and a common knot close to it; the

Specimens of String Writing.



third by the characteristic, and a common knot half an inch from it; and the fourth by the characteristic, and a common knot an inch from it. Thus A is simply a large round knot; B is a large round knot, with a common knot close to it; C is a large round knot, with a common knot half an inch from it; and D is a large round knot, with a common knot an inch from it, and so on. The alphabet above described is found by experience to answer completely the purpose for which it was invented. In this alphabet, the greater part of the Gospel of Mark, and the 119th Psalm, and other passages of Scripture, and historical works have been executed. The string is wound round a horizontal revolving frame, and passes from the reader as he proceeds."

In geography, as the extract given on page 25 shews, embossed maps and globes were used. Glasgow Institution had a globe that weighed 2½ cwt, and other Schools had smaller editions of the same apparatus. In this the outside educational world is again evident for these were the days when "the use of globes" was a necessary accomplishment and Herbertson and Fleure had not yet been born. Nowadays geography is taught for its intimate connection with man's story on the planet but in 1837 its inclusion in the curriculum of a School for the Blind was justified on the grounds that it added to the stock of knowledge that it introduced variety and that it cultivated the sense of touch.

Alston's description of one of the pieces of geographical

apparatus is interesting both in itself and for the high value placed on what to-day would be considered informative lumber. "A rectangular board contains a representation in relief of the comparative lengths of the principal rivers in the world, reckoning from the Forth and Clyde up to the mighty Amazon. From the knotted cords appended below the mouth of each river the Blind are enabled to read the names of the rivers, the places of their rise and termination, and their lengths in miles. The principal towns on the rivers are denoted by small brass knobs. Upon the same board a method is adopted for enabling the Blind to acquire by the sense of touch a correct idea of the relative bulk of the different political divisions of the earth. The Countries are represented by elevated squares, the comparative areas of which correspond with those of the countries; and their numerical areas, as well as their respective populations, are also expressed upon knotted cords."

It is somewhat disconcerting though, after all, not surprising to find that the most acute of contemporary chroniclers, the Abbé Carton, says without apology or preamble, "very little time is lost in explaining to the pupils these beautiful objects scientifically and in general all these articles and machines are considered even in the Institutions, rather as being curious than useful."

Tangible arithmetic has usually been effected by means of a board and pegs or pins. A large number of notes, arranged in rows, were cut in the board and into these the pegs were

placed in varying positions. In the earliest apparatus used in schools the holes were square. Two pegs were employed and as these had differing ends, sixteen signs could be obtained. Its inventor, David Macbeath of Edinburgh made no use of the six additional signs but the ingenious Mr. Taylor of York afterwards utilised them to express plus, minus and the letters, w, x, y and z. In this way he found the board serviceable for algebra. William Long, who had been one of Macbeath's pupils and had secured a post as teacher in Glasgow Asylum, carried Macbeath's invention an important step further by making the hole pentagonal. Two pegs were still employed and the next advance came when one peg was found to be sufficient to express all the numerals. This pin had a projection from a corner at one end and from the middle of a side at the other. The holes on the board were arranged with the base of the pentagon farthest away from the operator. The even numbers were obtained by inserting the peg to shew the projection on the side. Thus number two had the projection shewing on the middle of the base. To obtain number four the peg was moved round one side clockwise and so on for six, eight and nought. For number one the corner projection shewed at the left corner of the base and the same clockwise movement gave three, five, seven and nine. The side of the pentagon measured about six or seven millimetres and the invention when the single peg was used was a serviceable piece of apparatus. It was superseded by a board designed by the Rev. William Taylor, of whom more will be heard later. This is

not characteristic of early days, but as it has been in use for nearly half a century a few words of description here may not be considered too far out of place. The holes are star shaped and the pegs square. Each peg has a bar projection at one end and a two-dot projection at the other. Eight different positions are possible and this when both ends are used gives the ten numerals and six positions which are utilised for the signs denoting the simple operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, the decimal point and the relationship of equality.

In those days the classes had not separate rooms but were taught in one large bare apartment with one teacher in charge and several monitors. The teacher could not usually boast of any special pedagogical qualifications. So long as he was honest, intelligent and, what was highly prized, a firm disciplinarian, he was considered equal to the occasion. He might be a small shopkeeper who wanted to relinquish the hazards of trade for safety and a competence or he might be attracted from the Staff of a National School by the call of the special work. He was expected to be generally useful to the Institution as a whole and might be called away from his teaching several times in a morning to attend to other bits of his work. It was a system under which the smart pupil made progress while the dullard accepted frequent tribulation as the inevitable consequence of his dullness and, in moments of resignation, as a fair exchange for successfully evading the toils of acquisition.

As has been already shewn, most of the Institutions contained both children and adults and no special attempt was made to keep them separate. At meals and throughout their leisure they would be together and hold a community of ideas no longer thought desirable.

The ideal of normality was not insisted upon. Mannerisms of speech, carriage and behaviour were not so ruthlessly eliminated as they are to-day. On at least one occasion it is recorded that the inmates of an Institution were taken out like a party of rock climbers, united by a rope. Much more recently in vogue was the "crocodile" wherein each youngster laid his hand on the shoulder of the one in front. In extenuation, it should be remembered that the inclusion of partially blind children, so useful as guides, is of recent date.

Life must have been dull indeed in these intensely laudable Institutions. The prescribed relaxation of the pupils was the reading of the Bible in type that was an exasperation to the spirit. Here is the description of a Sunday in 1838. "After breakfast and before the inmates prepare for Church, they are assembled in the School-room when one of the blind reads a chapter of the Bible and each boy and girl repeats a Psalm or Hymn. Afterwards they are attended to Church. In the evening each has his book. It is most encouraging to perceive with what care the pupils acquire the task assigned them. They will repeat six, eight and twelve verses with great correctness.

At the hour fixed, they all assemble in the School-room before the teacher and repeat the task which they have learned. Afterwards they read a chapter and close the exercises with prayers. At eight o'clock they retire to bed."

Resignation and a proper spirit of gratitude for benefits received were the mental postures most highly in favour with the management. "We shall take particular care" wrote Valentin Hauy in 1786, "to join in their library works equally fitted to form the heart and cultivate the mind, in fixing as the basis of their studies the most essential of all studies, that of religion. By the assistance of such principles we shall inculcate the love of duty and, in particular, of gratitude towards his benefactors." This is the keynote of the British Institutions for the best part of a century after Hauy's words saw the light.

It is always dangerous however to go too far in generalisation. Here is the contrasted account of another school,as it appeared to a visitor in 1833. "In the Institution des Jeunes Aveugles (between the ages of ten and fourteen) there are one hundred of these interesting beings, and a more delightful spectacle cannot be imagined than a view of its interior. You see not there the listless, helpless blind man, dozing away his days in a chimney nook, or groping his uncertain way about the house; but you hear the hum of busy voices, - you see the workshops filled with active boys, learning their trades from others as blind as themselves, -

you see the schoolroom crowded with eager listeners, taught by blind teachers. When they take their books, you see the awakened intellect gleam from their smiling faces, and, as they pass their fingers rapidly over the leaves, their varying countenances bespeak the varying emotions which the words of the author awaken. When the bell rings, they start away to the play-ground, - run along the alleys at full speed, - chase, overtake, and tumble each other about, - and shout and laugh and caper round with all the careless heartfelt glee of boyhood. But a richer treat and better sport awaits them; the bell again strikes, and away they all hurry to the hall of music; each one brings his instrument, and takes his place; they are all there - the soft flute and the shrill fife - the hautboy and horn - the cymbal and drum - with clarionet, viol, and violin; - and now they roll forth their volume of sweet sounds, and the singers, treble, bass, and tenor, striking in with exact harmony, swell it into one loud hymn of gratitude and joy, which are displayed in the rapturous thrill of their voices, and painted in the glowing enthusiasm of their animated countenances." Unfortunately this is all rather subjective but it certainly bears witness to the happy tone of the School. Pleasure is relative and though the youngster of to-day would prefer his own conditions to those of a hundred years ago the pupils of those days must have had their blissful moments and wild thrills of delight from experiences which a modern child would consider merely boring. Institutions would

vary - the personal factor of the master and matron would count for much and within the limits of the system a wide latitude would certainly be found. This again is just a reflection of the world outside. It was a time in which it behoved everyone to behave according to the station to which a Divine Providence had called him. The standards of behaviour demanded by public opinion varied according to the stratum of Society. The Courts of George IV and William, the squirearchy and the product of the charity school had few precepts of conduct in common. Each moved in the orbit of its own order. If here and there the poor were kindly treated it was because of the magnanimity of the philanthropic not because they had any right to it. The dawning consciousness of social justice as a right rather than as a condescension is exemplified in the bitter feud between John Bright and the Earl of Shaftesbury. That contention illumines the mid-nineteenth century attitude to those in lowly station and so should not be ignored by those who would understand the social atmosphere of the Schools for the Blind during the first half century or so of their existence.

CHAPTER III

AN OLD TIME CONTROVERSY

Chapter III

In the description of his aims and methods which Valentin Hauy published in 1786 he states quite frankly that the idea of embossed printing was very old and that his contribution was not so much that of inventing as of turning the invention to the use of the blind. Anyone who is acquainted with the usual processes of printing, he says, will remember how the damp paper comes off the machine deeply embossed on the back of the sheet by the pressure of the type. If the type were made in the form of the actual letters instead of being reversed, this raised printing would be on the lower side of the paper - while the print on the side struck by the type would be reversed. Hauy had an italic fount made in this way and was satisfied with its legibility to the fingers. The pupils were taught sufficient composition to set up their own books and many special bits of apparatus were invented for this purpose by Hauy and his friends, among whom he had the good fortune to number M. Clousier the King's Printer. The pages were printed on one side only and before being bound were pasted back to back.

In the little essay above mentioned Hauy admits that his books are bulky and to meet this drawback he starts on the elaboration of a code of contractions and abbreviations. In addition he expected to be able to cut down the size of his books, by gradually reducing his type, as the tactile acuity of the blind improved.

Specimen

d'impression en

relief de l'insti-

tut de Paris

A B C D E F G H I K

L M N O P Q R S T U V

W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o

p q r s t u v w x y z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Imprimé à bruges

THE ABOVE IS A FACSIMILE OF TYPE USED BY VALENTIN HAÜY.

Hauy also taught his pupils to write ordinary script. His method seems to have been to write it backwards with a stiff unsplit steel pen on thick paper. The writing was by this means embossed on the under side of the sheet.

Some of Hauy's books were brought to England in 1827 by Lady Elizabeth Lowther for her blind son who straightway procured similar types and, with the help of a servant, printed off for his own use, the Gospel of St.Matthew. No British School, however, ever took kindly to the round italic type. On the other hand, Hauy's general propositions were accepted and his methods followed by the most successful experimenters of the next generation. The Paris School made no improvements on Hauy's original efforts. Research and experimentation were confined to Britain and America. The question of the best type for the blind was then a familiar one in the discussions of learned Societies and a surprising number of systems were evolved. Attention may, with advantage, be focussed on 1832. In that year the Edinburgh Society of Arts offered one of its prizes for the best type and Mr. Alexander Hay, a blind man of Edinburgh, was successful with an arbitrary system. Six competitors entered. The Society felt that the matter needed further investigation and instead of recommending Hay's type for universal adoption it offered its gold medal for the following year and made the competition widely known. Fifteen competitors entered and in view of the inveterate preference given to Roman type for many years to

come it is interesting to note that twelve of the fifteen were arbitrary systems. Each entrant had to forward a memorandum and some of the inventors stated the claims of touch as against sight in language that could not be bettered with all the experience of to-day. Mungo Panton one of the competitors writes in defence of his arbitrary character, "The blind alphabet ought to be easy to learn, easily impressed on the memory and quickly read by the finger. It is generally admitted that the character most used by those who can see does not comply with these conditions and that to adopt it in order to spare the friends of the blind the difficulty of learning another is to sacrifice the interest of the blind to the indolence of those who enjoy their sight." And a little lower he says, "Therefore I believe that in the choice of an alphabet for the blind it is necessary to try to ascertain which is the form required by the sense of touch rather than to try and preserve some resemblance to known characters."

At this time the leader of thought in the blind world was the Rev. William Taylor, F.R.S. When the Edinburgh Society turned its attention to literature for the blind he was one of the Canons Choral of York Minster and had come into contact with blind affairs by serving as tutor to Sir Charles Lowther, to whom reference has already been made. He became, in 1835, the first Superintendent of the Wilberforce Memorial School and did much to organise the work there on sound lines. In 1845 he was translated to Worcester. In 1866 he assisted in

the founding of The College for the Blind Sons of Gentlemen and two years later he set on foot The Society for Providing Cheap Literature for the Blind. He died in 1870.

To this authority the Edinburgh Society turned for his opinion on the systems submitted. Taylor reported in favour of a plain Roman capital sent in by a Dr. Fry of London and the Society accepted his recommendation and awarded its gold medal accordingly. Five years later Taylor contributed a paper to the British Association and repeated his strong preference for a type that was as legible to the eye as to the finger.

The arguments which for fifty years saddled the blind of two hemispheres with the sad results of a wrong choice do not now carry conviction, but they had a show of reason not always granted them to-day. It is proverbially easy to be wise after the event. It has been already said that the propositions enunciated by Hauy were accepted by those who came after him and this is nowhere more clearly the case than in his dictum with regard to type in which he laid it down that any system proposed for the use of the blind must be readily legible to the eye.

James Gall of Edinburgh, an inventor about whom more will be said shortly, elaborates this idea in many pages of his voluminous works. In one such passage he says "No one but professed teachers of the blind would in all probability ever attempt to learn an arbitrary system. This would be a

most serious disadvantage to a literature which is intended not merely for blind asylums, but for every parlour and cottage where there is a person blind." The "professed teachers of the blind" did not bulk large in Gall's mind. He knew that the blind were illiterate and that they were for the most part scattered in units up and down the Country. He pictured some fond relative introducing the fingers of the blind to the character already well known to the eye. Every home that had a blind inmate would also house his teacher so that all that was needed to secure a lettered blind population was to disseminate his volumes throughout the land. His imagination bore him on and he saw the blind student carrying one step further the good work by teaching in his turn the printed page to those of the home who could not read. "Roman letter," said a speaker in Glasgow in 1838, "has the peculiar advantage of being equally adapted to ordinary schools and of being similar to the letters which the blind may have learned before losing their sight."

It is not difficult to see that there was a right instinct underlying these arguments although, as it happened, it led to the wrong turning. That instinct was the healthy desire to save the blind from an undue segregation. This danger is expressed in vivid terms by the Abbé Carton of Bruges. "The largest number of blind is found amongst the poor, and the greatest misfortune of the blind consists in their isolation. All our efforts should tend towards bringing them near to

curselves, and to make their education as like our own as possible, and to begin this education as quickly as may be, and not to think that a special institution is needed for teaching them to read. If the characters in their books are those which we teach to other children, ordinary schools will be able to admit from their infancy these unfortunate beings, who have been hitherto kept afar off under a false pretext; and their misfortune will lie less heavily upon them, their intellect will be developed and the advantage they will derive from their stay in special establishments will be in harmony with what they will have learnt before entering them.

Young blind people are very subject to low spirits because they are shut out from the occupations and games of other children; always confined to the house, trained rather than guided, overwhelmed with careful but too often mistaken attentions, they are prevented from acquiring that confidence in themselves they ought to have; and, for fear of a fall or a slight hurt, their relatives do not let them know the place where they live and the objects surrounding them, which would be so great an advantage to them. If the young blind went to school with other children, they would take part in their games and would be strengthened by the exercise. They would be obliged to rely more on themselves; for from natural indifference the children who had their sight would often leave them to themselves, or would be satisfied to direct them by words, which would be still better. But choosing the ordinary

character would render all this possible, and the teaching of the blind would thus become as simple as that of others."

This sentiment was right but the deductions, being from insufficient data, were erroneous and the decision based upon them was wrong. The best way to prevent the undue isolation of the blind has been shewn by experience to be to give them the machinery best adapted to their use and so enable them the more quickly and efficiently to keep abreast of the intellectual life around them. As Dr. Armitage said "A man is isolated by everything that renders the acquisition of knowledge difficult and tedious and his isolation is diminished by everything that facilitates his power of self-education."

Of the many systems entered for the Society's prize and medal, all but two are now forgotten. The type which won the medal became with various slight modifications the leading system of Britain and America. That of Gall who was also a competitor is preserved mainly in the diffuse but interesting writings of its inventor. Although his system was never adopted to any great extent, these give the man and his labours a substance and reality which call for further mention.

Gall, who was a printer and had thus advantages for his researches, devoted himself with indefatigable ardour to this unusual sideline of his trade. In the wordy controversy that began, with his experiments, in the twenties, the Roman letter party although triumphant were in a minority. Gall makes feeling references to the persuasions of his friends who seem

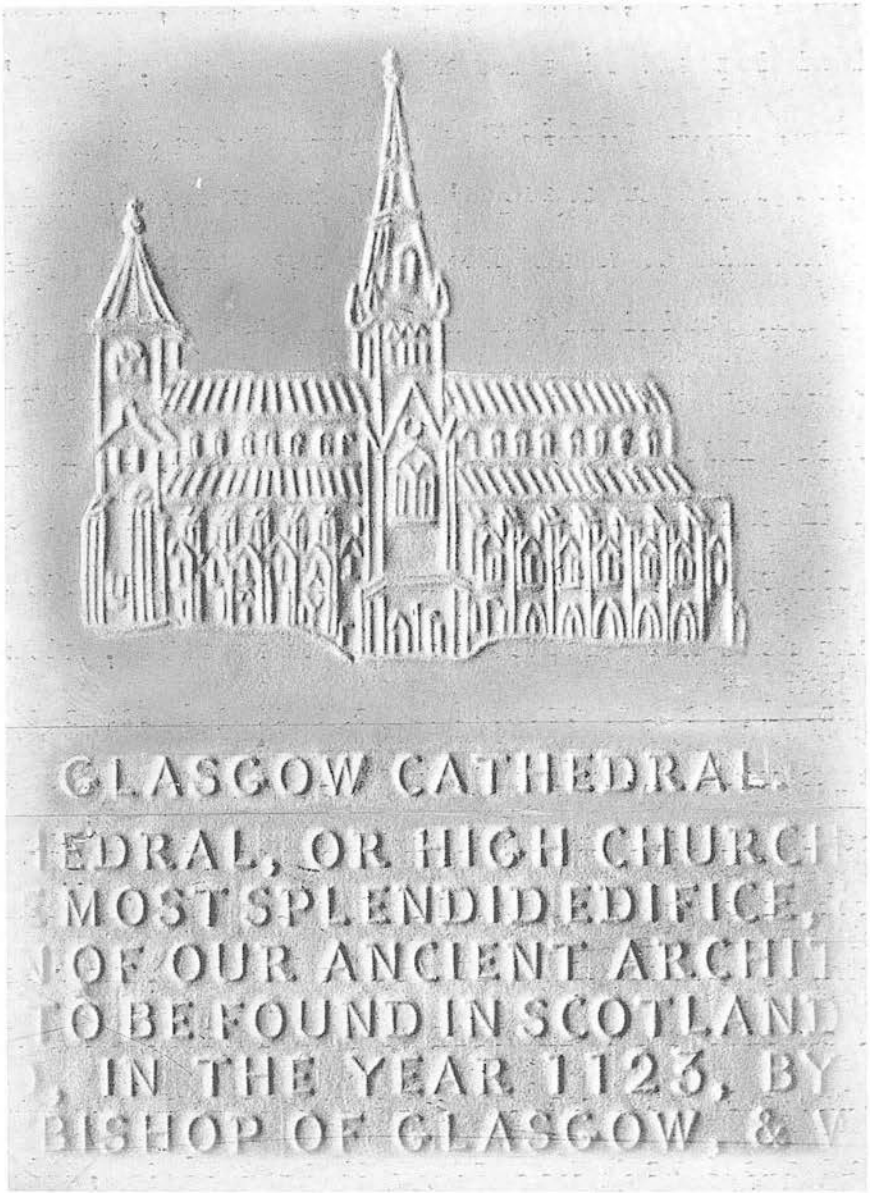
to have been, one and all, upholders of the arbitrary idea, and confesses that he found it wiser to carry out his Roman letter experiments almost in secret. His own convictions were unalterable. In his unregenerate days, it is true, he had invented an arbitrary system with a straight line and dot but now he put such frivolities resolutely behind him and bent all his energies to the task of devising a Roman letter that should be at once readable to the eye and to the finger. Thus he gradually worked out an angular character which in defiance of his own doctrine departed in some instances so far from the original as to be barely recognisable. His admirable patience in experiment merited a greater measure of success than that which actually crowned his efforts. Setting aside his own estimate of his achievements, and it is plain that affection warped his judgment, the fact remains that although given a careful trial under his personal supervision in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London his system failed to find general acceptance. As has been already shewn Gall was a strong supporter of a type that could be easily read by the eye and it is an irony of circumstance that his own letter, as it departed more and more from the conventional alphabet in the course of his long drawn out experiments, failed the more to secure the suffrages of the Schools. Alston, in fact, boldly calls Gall's angular character an arbitrary type, a reproach that must have been felt by his rival as the unkindest cut of all. Gall's first series of experiments were completed by 1827 and the Gospel of St.John,

Example of Gall's type in three sizes.

his first book, was issued in 1834.

John Alston, the Treasurer and leading figure of the Glasgow Asylum, was the chief exponent, printer and disseminator of Fry's type. The changes he made in the original type were minute and his system remained a simple Roman Capital. Gall's triangular alphabet and Lucas's stenographic system which will be noticed shortly were all well known to him and he deliberately set them aside on the familiar plea that the best type for the blind must be one easily read by the seeing.

In 1836 he made an appeal for a special printing fund so that the expense of embossing his books should not fall on the Institution resources, and in January 1837 his press began to function. The work was prosecuted with such energy that by 1840 the embossing of the Scriptures was completed and copies were sent far and wide. The size chosen after experiment was Great Primer but Alston admitted that this might be too small for coarsened fingers and printed some works in double pica for older readers. He made his first missionary journey round the English Institutions in May 1837 and says that he found scarce ten persons who knew letters. After his third and last expedition, he is able to state that "now there are some hundreds who can read our books most distinctly from the child of eight to adults of upwards of sixty." He secured its adoption in St.George's (London) and Norwich. Good news came from the Institution at Philadelphia which wrote to congratulate him on his system and to say that they had begun to turn out

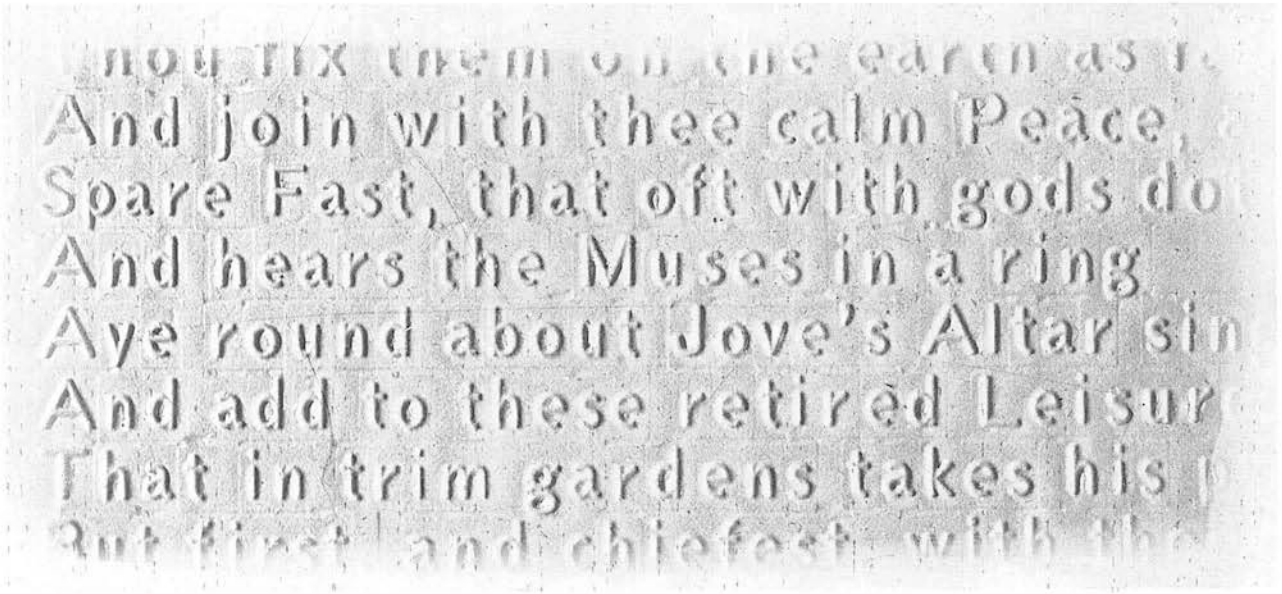


Example of Alston's type and an interesting early specimen of picture in relief.

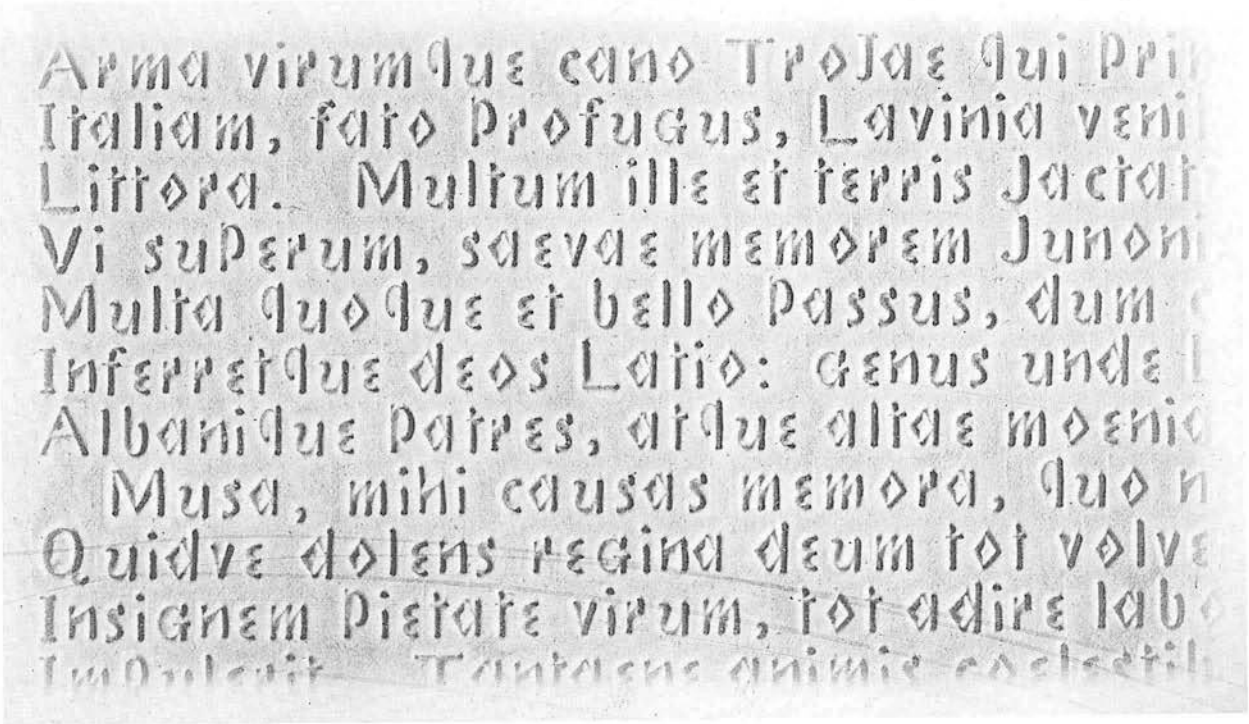
books according to his plan. The advantage of being able to share the products of their respective presses was mentioned and in 1838 Alston in high spirits despatched a large consignment of his volumes across the Atlantic. It is not reading too much between the lines to detect a suspicion of triumphant rivalry in the following newspaper report of 10th May, 1838. The pupils of the Glasgow Asylum had been giving proofs of their dexterity and the concluding test is described as follows. "Mr. Alston broke up the seals of a parcel and produced printed copies of Locke's Opinion of the Bible which had been thrown off from the Institution Press and retained under seal in order that they might be submitted to the blind for the first time at the meeting. This was accordingly done. The children were put upon their mettle for the honour of being allowed to read it and a girl, having rapidly fingered the words, announced that she was ready to read it to the audience with perfect ease."

"The perfect ease" should be accepted with a grain of salt but it is undeniable that the Roman letter became the most widespread system throughout the Country. Thirty years later when Dr. Armitage and his blind friends were weighing up the respective merits of the various systems it was found that all were proficient in this system while the other methods were known only to one or two.

Readers south of the Tweed had not to depend entirely on Glasgow for their reading in Roman letter. Funds were raised for its output in different parts of England. Taylor



Example of Roman Type. Worcester 1874.



Example of Roman type. (Howe's)

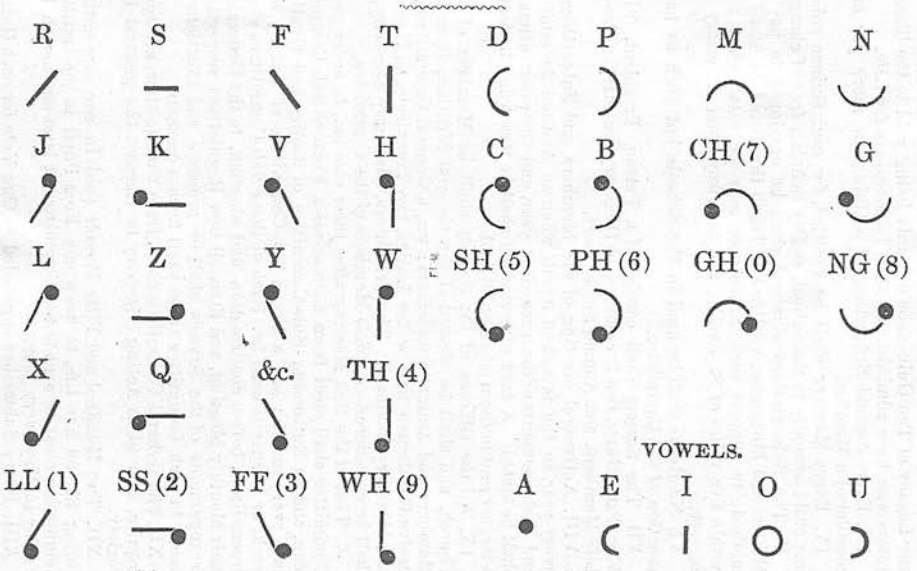
Printed at Louisville, Kentucky 1871.

started printing in York with a capital letter type and later with a capital and small letter type. This press continued to function under the direction of William Littledale, a blind man who succeeded Taylor as Superintendent.

The publications which Taylor issued from his printing house at Worcester, of which mention has already been made, were in two sizes to meet the respective needs of the hard-handed and the educated reader. A London firm of printers named J.E. Taylor & Co., produced several books in Roman type in 1854 for the Bristol Asylum and about the same time a fund was raised by St.George's for an issue in Alston. The differences which can be noted in the work of these various presses are slight and negligible. Finally, there is on record a series of publications from Cheltenham by a man named Mitford which were in Roman type but with the letters placed vertically.

As the history of Lucas type is inseparable from that of The London Society some reference has already been made in appendix 1 to this system. The labours of Lucas would appear to have been stimulated by the preceding efforts of Gall and Alston. In an "advertisement" to an early specimen of his work there occurs the following paragraph. "About the time Mr. Gall's alphabet was introduced, Lady Charlotte Erskine proposed to adopt an easier character and at her request Mr. Lucas of Bristol constructed [an alphabet]..... composed of all the known simple characters in existence.

CHARACTERS USED FOR THE ALPHABET AND FOR FIGURES
BY THE LONDON SOCIETY FOR TEACHING THE BLIND TO READ,
IN T. M. LUCAS'S EMBOSSED STENOGRAPHIC SYSTEM.
(CLASSED ACCORDING TO SHAPE AND POSITION OF THE DOT.)



Afterwards this expert stenographer conceived the happy idea of teaching the blind to read by means of stenography." An Association was formed under the title of The Bristol Society for embossing and circulating the Authorised Version of the Bible. Its Secretary was a Mr. F.W. Reid and the books were embossed by Philip Rose and Son of Broadmead, Bristol. This enterprise was wound up in 1840 and the founts and other appliances moved to the premises of The London Society.

The elements of the Lucas character were the straight line, curve and dot and the basis of the system was stenographic. Thus it differed from both Gall's and Alston's which aimed at a more or less exact transcription of the ink-print version. Lucas's great idea was to convey the meaning by an abbreviated medium. He made a single letter stand for a word wherever possible and as he says himself his general rule was "to employ only those letters that will sound the word omitting vowels when the word can be understood without them." Each letter of the alphabet stood for at least two words, a stood for and and after, b for be and but, c for Christ and can, d for down and debt, e for ever and every, f for of and father, g for God and good and so on. Some words were represented by two letters, ff stood for from, th for there and thee, sh for shall and shalt, ph for pharisee, gh for ghost, bl for blind, br for brother, gl for glory and so on.

The changes that were made in the system, and these were many and long continued, were carried out by a blind clergyman named J.W. Gowring who seems to have been as

unwearied in his efforts as Gall himself. There is something pathetic about the sisyphean labours of these pioneers patiently perfecting systems which were not capable of perfection and, with unquenchable zeal, seeking converts to media which were not deserving of propagation. It adds a touch of irony to the situation to reflect that before the Society's first panegyric on Lucas was published, the Braille system was already ten years old.

It has been noted that the embossing of the Bible in Alston's type was completed in 1840. A version in Lucas was finished in 1853. The following extract from the fifteenth Annual Report of The London Society reveals the devotion which the Board of Management felt towards "the incomparable Lucas" and the insinuating skill of their advocacy.

"The friends of the Society will rejoice to hear that their essential object, viz., the completion of the Bible on Lucas's system, has been accomplished, the last portion being now in the press. For fifteen years it has been the anxious wish of the Committee to attain this desirable object, and thus present to the Blind the whole of the Word of God in that form of which the experience of many years has fully proved the practical superiority over all other systems for embossing.

The facility of reading by means of Lucas's shorthand character renders it attainable to all classes of the Blind, whether afflicted from their earliest infancy, or deprived

of the blessing of sight at a later period of life: in the latter case, the sense of touch being necessarily less refined than in those who, from their youth, have depended so greatly upon it, they would have found it impossible, owing to the complication of strokes in the Roman letters, to read the Word of God for themselves by means of the alphabetic system.

Indeed, even by those who possess a sensitive touch, and are gifted with superior intelligence, the Roman character cannot be read with fluency.

It is natural for those who enjoy the blessing of sight to imagine that the Roman letters, with which they are so familiar, would be the easiest for the Blind to learn; but many instances could be adduced of persons who have made the attempt of learning the Roman character, and given it up in despair, whilst they have found no such difficulty in mastering the simple shorthand of Lucas's system. In many cases, that which, on a practical view, appears theoretically correct, is not eventually found to be practically useful.

The stenographic system, by contracting words into so small a space, enables the fingers to pass rapidly over a sentence, and thus bring a complete idea within the compass of a thought, so as to enable the Blind to read with the same enjoyment as a person who possesses the blessing of sight.

A wonderful proof of the facility with which Lucas's system can be read is afforded in the history of a Clergyman, who having been, twelve years since, deprived of sight,

attempted in vain to read by the common alphabetic characters, but , having acquired a knowledge of the stenographic system, now reads with such fluency as to perform his ministerial duties without any assistance, conducting two whole services every Sunday with the same ease and comfort as if he were not deprived of sight. The completion of the embossed Bible is to him a peculiar boon, not only by facilitating his private study, but also by enabling him to read in public the appropriate Church lessons throughout the year.

A striking evidence of the superiority of the shorthand system is, that the Institution for the Blind, established at Paris in 1786 (the founder of which M. Hauy, was the ingenious inventor of the raised alphabetic character), now prints its publications upon an arbitrary system, the pupils of the Institution bearing testimony to its superiority. Another proof of its superiority, more especially with reference to the facility with which the blind may be taught Lucas's system, (which is both arbitrary and stenographic), has been lately illustrated by the following fact."A little peasant girl, only ten years of age, in the south of Devon, has taught her blind and aged grandfather to read for himself the Word of God. Having lost his sight during a campaign in Egypt forty years ago, living in an isolated spot, deprived of the instruction of others, the aged soldier esteems this acquisition a peculiar blessing in his old age." Lucas type has been discussed with some fulness because, in addition to

its intrinsic interest, such a consideration shews the spirit of competition and controversy that marked the middle years of the last century. A further instance of this characteristic phase may be given. The School at Exeter which had been opened as a branch of The London Society and therefore as a rallying-point for Lucas fell from grace at an early date and went over to the opposition camp of Alston. Alston himself, in a missionary tour of the Kingdom, visited the town a few months later and confirmed the Committee in the change. Two years brought about a recantation and in spite of the blandishments of still another rival Mr. Frere, Lucas was re-instated. This is how the return of the prodigal is recorded in the annals of The London Society. "In the School at Exeter in which the Alphabetic system had been used for two years it was, after the fullest conviction of its inefficiency compared with Lucas, wholly relinquished on the determination of a special meeting when the superiority of the latter was completely established to the delight and gratification of the blind pupils themselves and to the entire satisfaction of the friends of the Institution."

As already stated, single letters frequently stood for words in Lucas and ambiguities arose in that more than one word was represented by the same letter. The first sentence in St.John's Gospel for instance was written thus:- in t bgini ws t wrd a t w ws w g, a t w ws g. Critics not unnaturally complained that too much was left to the intelligence of the reader. The interpretation of a symbol depended very much on

the context and reading was in danger of degenerating into guess-work. Some signs, for instance, could be read in as many as eight different ways. Thus Lucas was more useful when the matter to be read was familiar than when it was unknown. In the former case considerable fluency could be attained.

This applies in equal measure to the other shorthand system which appeared as the rival of Lucas in 1838 - the phonetic system of James Hatley Frere. In that year The London and Blackheath Association was floated for the propagation of books in the new type and during its short lifetime proved an aggressively militant body. Frere, who was himself blind, made use of a system of shorthand then in vogue known as Gurney's. It was phonetic and so differed from the principle underlying Lucas's method. Each word was embossed according to its pronunciation. "The names of the characters combined or sounded together give the word." Frere assisted the students of his plan by twelve rules in verse of which the following couplet is the last.

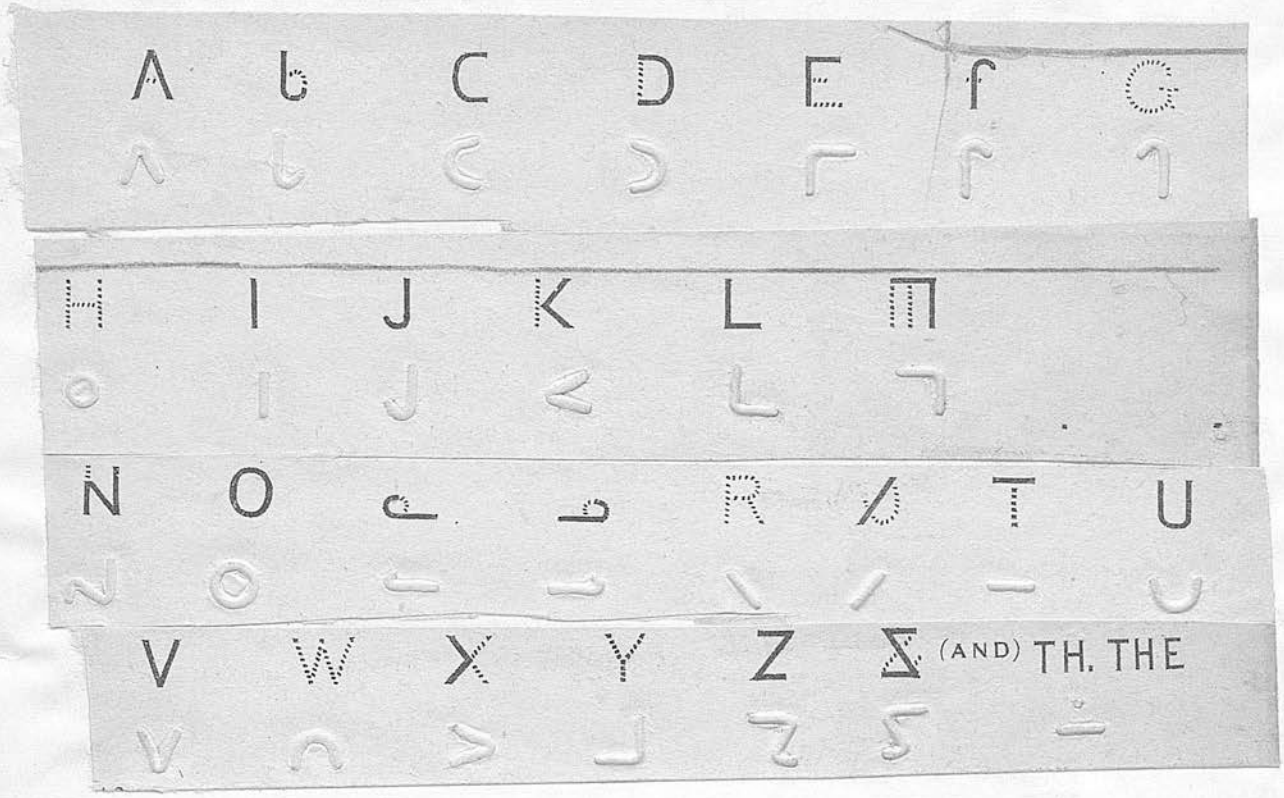
"Whene'er the proper rule don't yield you satisfaction
On trial, you will find the word is a contraction."

As poetry this is bad and as a clear direction it is worse yet the system earned a warm tribute from a competent judge in the person of Dr. Armitage. "Frere's characters" he says, "are the neatest and most tangible of all that have ever been invented for the use of the blind. His return line is excellent but his total want of punctuation is a serious

Example of Greene's type.

objection and his rules are too complicated . . . . . To an educated reader well acquainted with the book he is reading there is probably no system by which . . . . . reading can be accomplished with equal comfort and rapidity." The objections to the system were not always so well founded and the following sentence written in 1842 by the Superintendent of the Exeter Institution, shows that in those days any stone was considered good enough to throw at a rival system. "To the blind" said he "who are very subject to affections of the chest I fear that Frere's system would prove injurious from the extreme action of the lungs required to give articulation to the sounds." Overwhelmed by such reproaches the phonetic system withered away.

Moon is the one line system which survives from this period of typographical rivalry. Its inventor, William Moon, was born in 1818 and lost his sight partially at the age of four and completely at the age of twenty-one. He was from the outset keenly interested in visiting the blind in their own homes and did much to establish Home Teaching Societies all over the country. He was dissatisfied with the existing types and set about working out a system which would prove easy and legible to the hardened fingers of the worker and the dulled nerves of the aged. Like Gall and Alston he laid stress upon the advantage of having a type which could be easily read by the eye so that the relatives of the blind person might act as his teacher. His process of simplification, however, led



The Moon Alphabet.

him, as it had led Gall, to depart so much from the Roman letter that his system is frequently classed as arbitrary. His plan was to take the ordinary letter, mostly Roman capitals but in a couple of instances from the lower case and simplify them so that they became "open and clear to the touch." Thus A was embossed without its cross bar, D. without its front stroke and so on. Many of the symbols such as those for E, K, M, P, Q, S and X bear no resemblance to their prototypes although the method of their derivation can be traced and when explained to a pupil may help in the process of memorisation. The characters for G, H, R, W and Y are frankly arbitrary. Moon's printing was, like the other systems considered in this chapter, executed at first by means of movable types but later, as was also done in the case of Lucas, a stereotyping process was adopted. This was by means of metal plates to which were soldered pieces of wire in the shapes of the letters. It will be noted that the same character may be used to represent several letters according to its orientation. The semi-circle which stands for C is made to represent M, V or D according as it is turned through successive quadrants. The right angle which stands for E is made to represent M, Y and L when treated in a similar fashion. A third set of four is provided by an acute angle whose varying position give the symbols for the letters A, X, V and K. A straight line in four positions stands for I, T, R and S, while a hook gives B, J, F and G. Lastly, a set of three, N, Z and

a contraction for AND are furnished by a crooked line. Thus the twenty-seven letters of the alphabet are represented by ten symbols when these are considered irrespective of their position although of course there is no ambiguity when each is properly placed. One further feature of this system must be noted. Moon arranged that the reading finger should be guided by a bracket from one line to the next, each being read in alternate direction. This plan had already been followed by Frere, who, indeed, carried the idea one stage further by reversing the individual letters on the return line. Moon knew Frere's system well and had used it in his early Home Teaching days and there can be little doubt that he was indebted to it not only for the idea of the return line but for the shapes of several of his letters.

Moon's first book was printed in 1847 and for many years he carried on the work at his headquarters in Brighton and had the satisfaction of seeing its widespread adoption chiefly by Home Teaching Societies for use among adults but also in Schools for blind children. Moon died in 1894 but the work was carried on by his daughter until in 1914 the Moon Society became a branch of the National Institute for the Blind. The fact that Moon survived is in itself indicative of merit and there is no doubt that for the aged and the horny-handed the system is without an equal.

The comparative prices at which books in the competing types were sold are of some small antiquarian interest. The New Testament in Lucas type cost £1: 16: 0, in Alston £2 and

in Moon £4: 17: 0. The Old Testament in Lucas cost £8: 18: 4, in Alston £7: 15: 0 and in Moon £13: 10: 0. This was in 1860.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRIUMPH OF THE DOT.

Chapter IV.

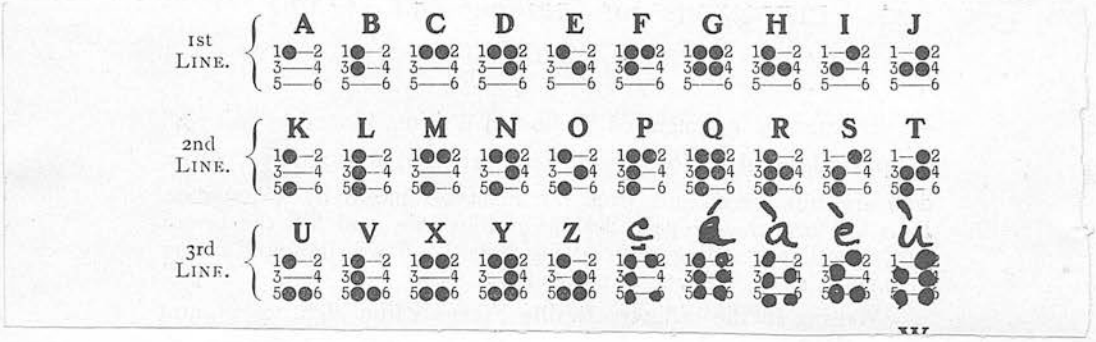
It is a commonplace in pedagogy that youngsters fail to realise the origin of every day necessities. In this lies their nearness to fairyland for to them a railway train or motor car is as inexplicable as a flying carpet, a flying carpet as inevitable as a motor car. Men have more knowledge of mechanics but in many respects they are but children of a larger growth and many of the inventions on which they lean most heavily are too much with them to create remark. In the world of the blind, Braille is taken for granted. It is too fundamental to rouse comment. It ranks as one of the indispensable factors in existence which are above the region of question. The writ of Braille runs wherever blindness occurs. It stretches from China to Peru and has been adapted to every tongue on the planet. It has made practicable a normal curriculum in schools for the blind and brought the method and outlook of these Institutions into line with those for ordinary children. The National Library's collection of 100,000 volumes in this Country is but one other manifestation of its influence. Yet the day is not remote when Braille had to fight for its right to live, had to join in the mêlée of contending types and called upon its head the uncompromising strictures of those who thought they knew what was best for the blind.

Louis Braille was the son of a harness-maker who lived at Coupvray a village some twenty-three miles from Paris. He was born in 1809 and blinded himself at the age of three when


Ls BRAILLE

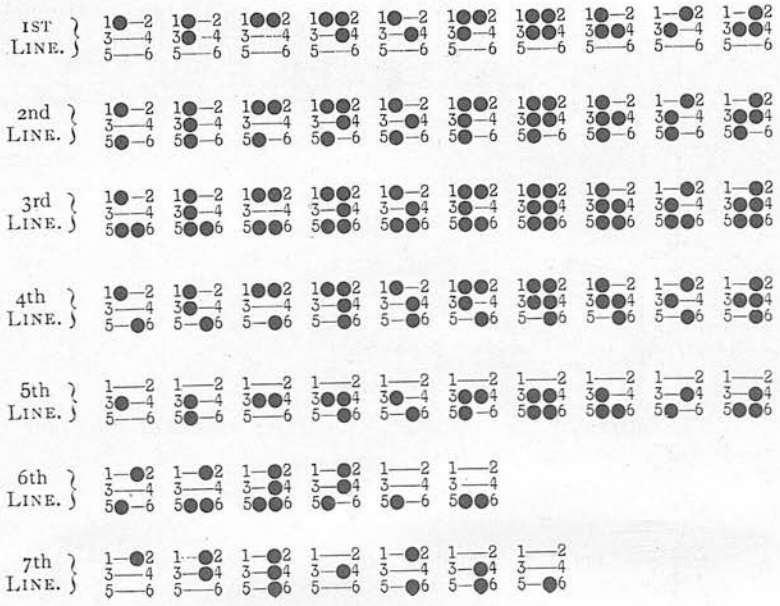
playing with one of his father's awls. His parents were keenly interested in their son's welfare and had him entered at the famous Jeunes Aveugles in the year 1819. The School was then under the energetic direction of Dr. Guillié and Braille made rapid progress with his studies. He learned to read on the Valentin Hauy letter and, like other pupils of those days, lamented the lack of an embossed type which could be written. His scholarship was praiseworthy, while his character was strong and upright. He found favour in the eyes of the School Authorities and, at the age of seventeen, was made a junior master. He combined with his duties as teacher that of organist and held appointments at different times in various Paris churches. He seems to have been a hard worker and wrote several condensations of text books for his pupils. The problem of how to get a system that could be written as well as read was constantly in his thoughts and by the time he was twenty he had found the germ of what he sought. There was at that time in Paris an artillery officer called Charles Barbier who had devoted himself to the same problem and who had worked out an arbitrary system which had three times received the commendation of the Academy of Sciences. He devised, as the basis of his scheme, a set of twelve dots, six from top to bottom and two sideways. By varying the number and position of dots he was able to ring the changes on an enormous number of combinations. Of these, however, he only used thirty-six. In fact his machine was too elaborate

for the work it had to do. End and means were not nicely balanced. The system was phonetic and Barbier from time to time made changes in it, which, as Carton says, rendered it more ingenious than rapid. His elaborations also put it outside the possibility of general use in Schools. It is easy to picture young Braille poring over the needless intricacies and unexplored possibilities of Barbier's invention and seeking for the formula which should reduce it to simplicity. He felt that in the dot lay the secret of writing for the blind and that therefore in the dot was to be found the consummation of his quest. How the inspiration came is not known. Braille, unlike Gall, is silent on his experiments. It must be enough to grasp the triumphant fact that he succeeded. He cut Barbier's twelve dot letter down to six and contented himself with a simple alphabetic arrangement. From four dots Braille found that he could get ten symbols, one with a single dot, one with all four, four with two and four with three. Ten was still a number to conjure with in France and Braille must have found this initial step full of happy augury. A second row of ten letters could be derived from the first by the addition of one of the bottom dots and a third line by the addition of both. This was more than sufficient for his alphabet and so the last five symbols of his third line were utilised for accented letters while the handsome quota of thirty-two possible combinations was left over for punctuation and contractions. A conception so brilliant and yet so



Braille's first three lines

[*The black dots represent the raised points of the sign ; the dashes serve to show their position in the group of six.*]



The 63 possible combinations.

simple makes one wonder that nobody had thought of it before but such an impression is deceptive. The same might be said of Newton's laws of motion, or of many another conquest by the mind of man. The path seems easy when once illumined by the light of genius. It is not easy to detect any plan in the construction of Braille's first ten letters. The single dot is probably the choice that most experimenters would have made for a beginning and the same might be said for the next two letters. D. is the first divergence from the expected for it would have been natural to have come next to the remaining combinations of two dots. Instead of this, a three-dot symbol stands for the fourth letter and then a return is made to a two-dot combination. The only generalisation that can be extracted is that Braille first exhausted the symbols that included dot 1 before proceeding to the two which were without it. This is slight and of no importance and it may well have been that the selection of the primary symbols was, like the system itself, arbitrary.

Braille first made his invention known to his own School in 1829 and brought out an amended and expanded version in 1834. He was granted leave to teach it in his spare time to the scholars of the Jeunes Aveugles but the School did not adopt it as its official medium till 1854. By that time its inventor had been dead two years. Braille proved that a dot was more legible than a line system and it is interesting to observe that Gall and other experimenters had discovered the

same fact for themselves although they were unable to break away sufficiently from their a priori reasoning to make full use of it. They found that the triangular letter and the Roman letter, too, was more effective when made in dots than in continuous lines and Gall's latest books were printed in this manner. Some of the Continental embossers of Roman type also utilised the serrated letter and thereby added to speed and ease of legibility. The idea was not derived from Braille but from their own mechanism for writing. This was hardly writing but a kind of home made printing with wooden types. These represented the letters of the alphabet by series of pin points. When such a type was pushed into paper it formed a dotted letter on the under side. Readers doubtless found that they approved this style of letter and their preference had its reaction on the printing press.

Braille's system excelled all others in its easy legibility but its chief merit lay in the fact that it could be written. The writing, too, could be done rapidly and without undue difficulty. This gave it a place among the competing types but, as has been seen in the previous chapter, the question was not judged on its merits but predetermined on the dictum that the best type must be readily legible to the eye. Arbitrary was an epithet of condemnation which could not be denied to Braille. The Abbe Carton of Bruges was the only man who ever fancied that there was some resemblance between Braille and ordinary print.

It was forty years after its invention that Dr.

Armitage, the great missionary of Braille, began his work second only in importance to that of Braille himself. Dr. Armitage had bad sight, depended on his fingers for his own reading, and was an implacable rebel against the prevailing doctrine that matters tactile should be judged by the eye.

He gathered round him a band of disinterested and leisured blind men and set about the task of deciding which of all the available types was the fittest to survive. "The members of the Executive Committee (of the British and Foreigh Blind Association) were blind" says Dr. Armitage, "or so nearly so as to be obliged to rely on the sense of touch, and not on that of sight, for the purpose of reading. Most members were also able to read at least three systems of raised letters by touch, and were not pecuniarily interested in any. Some were able to read by every known system, except when, from the extreme smallness of the type, there existed a physical impossibility. They took care themselves to use extensively the methods which seemed to promise well, and they carefully noted the views and wishes of all the intelligent blind within their reach."

"Several members had very extensive experience in teaching among the ignorant and aged, as well as among the more intelligent and young. They approached their work with various views, according to their greater or less previous acquaintance with the subject, but with the determination to spare no pains in arriving at the truth. In order to make

use of much valuable information thus attainable, the Council, at an early period of its labours, requested the attendance of all the intelligent blind within their reach. They took much pains to ascertain exactly their views, and the reasons for the opinions they held. This evidence was carefully noted down at the time and read over to the blind person under examination. At the commencement of each examination the witness was asked by what systems he could read, and books in these systems were then given to him to test his ability. He was only allowed to give evidence upon ~~three~~ osl systems with which he could thus prove himself to have a practical acquaintance. The information thus obtained was of great value, as it represented a sort of public opinion among those of the blind who had paid attention to this subject."

This was in 1868 and the result of the assize was a unanimous verdict in favour of Braille. Thereafter Armitage set himself to the task of popularising the point system in the Schools of his own and other countries. He pleaded the cause of Braille at the first conference ever held of teachers and friends of the blind. This was in Vienna in 1873. The result can best be given in Armitage's own words. "The subject was referred to a Committee, and at the next Congress, held in 1876 in Dresden, it was decided to adopt a modified Braille, in which, though the Braille frame was retained, the letters were altered in such a way that those letters which

occurred most frequently in the German language were represented by the fewest points. The most experienced of the German teachers strongly objected to this decision, and it was reversed at the Congress held in Berlin in 1879, which recommended the old Braille system for universal adoption. This was confirmed at the Congress held in Frankfort in 1882."

When Armitage began his campaign in 1868 there was, he says, not a single Institution in the United Kingdom in which the Braille system was used and the number of individuals who knew it probably did not exceed twenty. By 1882 he was able to write "there is now probably no Institution in the civilized world where Braille is not used except in some of those in North America." Without Armitage's great personal influence and tireless pertinacy in what he knew to be a cause of fundamental importance to the blind it is certain that many years more would have elapsed before Braille was generally adopted. Even as it was the quotation above given probably strained the truth. In 1883 the Schools and Institutions of Britain in reply to a questionnaire gave thirty-five as using Moon as their official system and only twenty-seven as using Braille. This is more in line with Dr. Armitage's own complaint at York in the same year that only three British Institutions were making a large use of the Braille books and writing frames produced by his Association. A number of years had still to elapse before Braille attained the position of an exclusive medium.

Armitage's mention of the Schools in North America makes

it desirable at this stage to glance at the development of embossed methods in that continent, more particularly as that development brought into the field a derivative of Braille which proved the most formidable rival that that system had yet known. In the early days of the American Institutions Roman type was the only system. There were two or three variations of Alston's letter. One was printed by Dr. Howe and known as the Boston type. This was an angular lower case letter. Dr. Friedlander of Philadelphia used a capital letter and the Virginia School issued books in a type which included both capitals and small letters as in ordinary print. In 1871 the National Printing House at Louisville was still turning out books in the angular Howe type but with capitals added.

The Missouri School at St.Louis was the only one which shewed any favour to British Braille and this at least in its early days was not identical with the orthodox version. America was isolated from Europe by a high tariff which prevented the importation of books and apparatus. The first real break in the monopoly of the Roman letter came in 1869 when Dr. Russ of New York brought out a dot system which he contended was without the chief faults of Braille. He considered it a mistake in Braille that the letters were constructed without regard to their frequency of occurrence in ordinary literature. For instance the letter t occurs more often than k and yet as it has twice as many dots it must take

longer to write. His second objection was that each letter in Braille occupied the same space. The letter a, for instance, which has only one dot takes up as much room as q or y which have each five dots. Russ avoided these features by arranging his alphabet in accordance with "frequency" and by having what he termed a variable base. His system was two dots high and none of his letters exceeded three dots in width though his contractions ran to four. The two characteristics of frequency and variable base gave the system an economy of space which, it was contended, amounted to as much as 30%. Dr. Russ passed on his adaptation to Mr. Wait who had become Principal of the New York Institution in 1863 and found in him an enthusiastic advocate. Wait was a man of strong personality and became as energetic in America for New York Point as Armitage was in Europe for Braille. Inter-Institutional rivalry however was not unknown across the Atlantic and Mr. Anagnos the son-in-law and successor of Dr. Howe at Boston refused to believe that any good thing could come out of New York. It was clear that the days of Roman type were numbered and that some point system was bound to come. Anagnos therefore allowed some members of his staff to make experiments in that direction. The result was another variation of Braille - a variation more closely akin to its original than New York Point but different enough to constitute it a new system and thus create another obstacle in the way of a universal type. Mr. J.W. Smith, the head of the Tuning Department at Perkins, was its originator and his suggestion was to retain the Braille cell but to plan

his letters according to frequency of occurrence. "Modified Braille" as it was called was adopted in 1879 in the Institution of its birth but for twenty years it made little headway against its New York rival which, under the strenuous apostleship of Mr. Wait, had captured the Federal printing house at Louisville and sent its literature free to any School that asked for it.

Dr. Armitage and his friends at the British and Foreign Blind Association were not unaware of these movements in America and gave New York Point an exhaustive examination with the firm and disinterested resolve to adopt whole-heartedly the one which proved itself the better. Their trials lasted two years and ended in favour of Braille. The pros and cons are given in full in the second edition of Armitage's book but in the light of still more recent developments scarcely merit close consideration by the student of to-day.

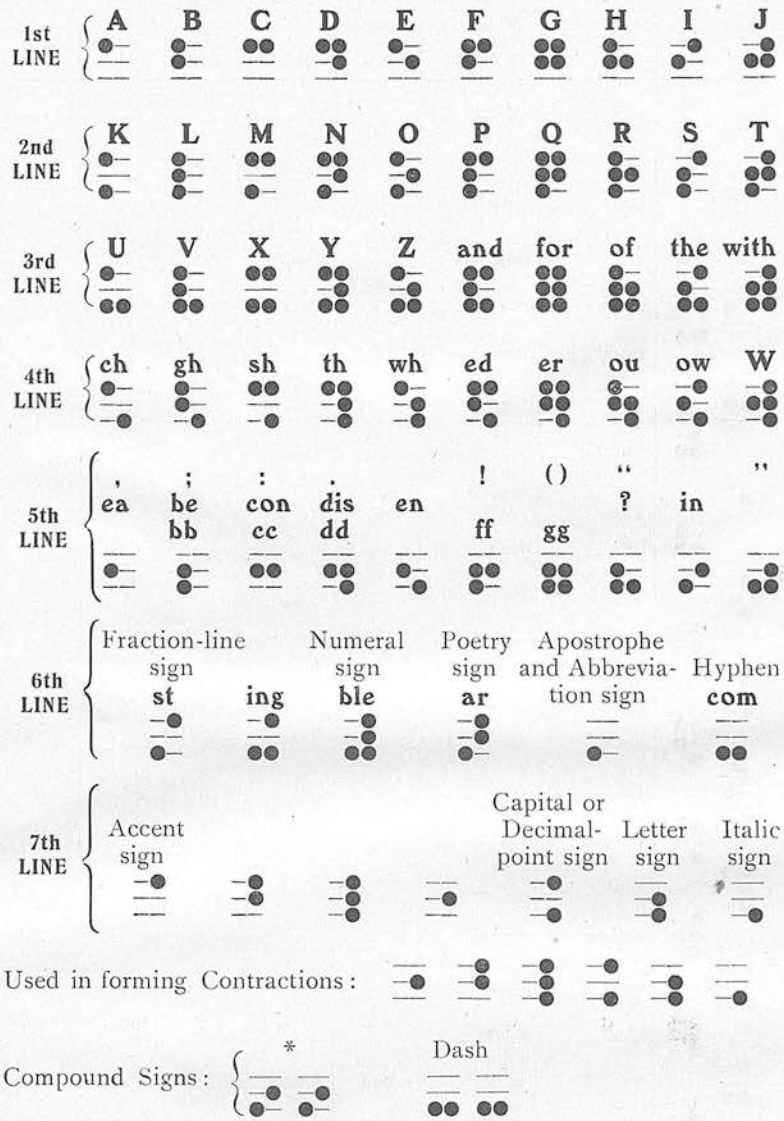
The situation with regard to Braille remained very much the same till the end of the century. Armitage died in 1890 but the establishment in 1868 of the British and Foreign Blind Association had provided permanent machinery for the dissemination of Braille books and writing frames. A printing press was opened at the School for the Blind in Edinburgh in 1892 while the printing of the scriptures was carried out by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The British and Foreign Blind Association issued from time to time rules for the writing of Braille but these were not always obeyed by their own stereotypists. It became

generally felt that the time had come for a revision of the contractions and for a general standardising of practice both in writing and printing. The Association assumed an autocractic tone in the matter of revision. "The Council" they said "reserve to themselves the right to decide what alterations, if any, they should recommend to the public." They bowed however to the general desire for revision and standardisation and appointed a sub-committee for the purpose under the Chairmanship of Dr. afterwards Sir Washington Ranger. The Committee's report was published in 1901 and was discussed at a conference held in London in the following year. It met with little support from the blind community and the claim of the Association to act as an executive without responsibility to any electorate told still more heavily against it. A new Committee was appointed with greater claim to a representative character. This, under the name of the British Braille Committee and the Chairmanship of the Rev. Arthur Taylor of the Bible Society sat for more than two years and presented its Report to the Conference which met in Edinburgh in 1905. The Committee set out a revised form of Braille in two grades. Grade I was uncontracted and Grade II fully contracted and intended for general use. The alphabet was left unaltered and no radical change made in the method of contraction. The rules were as few and their expression as short and simple as possible. It has been frequently complained that the contractions are an aggregate of

BRAILLE

GRADE II.



See Grade II. Rules 1 to 6.

individual preferences rather than a set of scientific symbols but in spite of this and other shortcomings the system as set forth in this Report still holds the field. A still more elaborately contracted Grade was adumbrated but this was not fully worked out when the Committee came to an end. It was completed later by several members for the British and Foreign Blind Association which now prints a few books for students and other advanced readers, in this form, known as Grade III.

CHAPTER V

THE BEGINNINGS OF CO-OPERATION.

Chapter V

Before the Institutions had been many years at work hostile criticism began to be heard, not from the general public but from earnest workers among the blind who felt that in some important respects the Institutions were not justifying their existence. These strictures arose from a consideration of the non-success of the pupils in after life. The Institutions were content to give schooling and technical instruction without making any organised attempt to find their charges satisfactory employment either in shops or in their own homes. This had been pointed out as early as 1837 by Thomas Anderson in a strong plea for the wider adoption of the workshop as contrasted with the School or Asylum system. Anderson had been Manager of the Edinburgh Asylum, and, at the time of his pamphlet, was Master of the School at York. In his Edinburgh days he had opposed Gall's efforts to make reading a prominent plank in schoolroom work and continued at York his stout defence of a utilitarian policy. The system in operation in the Scottish Institutions found workshop places for practically all whom they trained and, in this connection, Anderson quotes Dr. Howe, the pioneer of the education of the blind in America, who said in 1833 after a tour of the European Institutions that "the Institution at Edinburgh is on the whole the best I saw in Europe. It comes nearer than any other the attainment of the great object of such Institutions, namely, enabling the inmates to support

themselves by their own efforts."

His contrasted picture of the Paris School has already been referred to. Anderson censures the English organisations for following in the wake of Paris instead of ensuring the after success of their pupils by workshop provision or by schemes of after-care. It should be noticed in passing that the Scottish system was itself not altogether above criticism. Like the English method, it failed to grapple with the blind population as a whole. The English Institutions were not able to provide work for all whom they trained while the Scottish workshops trained only such as they could absorb as wage-earners. Thus the hiatus in Scotland came before, in England after training but in neither country were all the trainable and employable blind adequately catered for. This wider outlook was not evident in Anderson's day and the contentions in his pamphlet were sound. His outspoken opinions, however, seem to have fallen on unheeding ears and the percentage of self-supporting ex-pupils continued to be lamentably small. It was mainly a realisation of these deficiencies, a realisation made vivid and urgent to philanthropic natures by personal contact with the workless and dependent blind that brought about, in the middle of the century, a new advance in the amelioration of their lot. Censure in such matters is of little value unless it has a constructive side, but this was not lacking and out of dissatisfaction came a forward move of great importance. As in the case of the Institutions themselves this can only be

followed by looking at individual enterprises in widely separated localities. The two most conspicuous examples are those which led to the foundation of the workshops in Tottenham Court Road, London, and in Cornwallis Street, Liverpool.

Elizabeth Gilbert the second daughter of the Principal of Brazenoze College, who in 1842 became Bishop of Chichester, was born in 1826, and became blind through scarlet fever at the age of three. She was sensibly educated at home and grew to be a sympathetic, impulsive, unselfish, strongwilled woman. Her delicate frame and poor health contrasted with the vigour and assurance of her spirit. She met difficulties and overcame them with unflagging courage and followed her star with an optimism and devotion which endear her personality to all who care to study, even at this lapse of time, the trials and achievements of her strenuous life.

William Hanks Levy, the faithful partner in her enterprise, was of a different temperament. Blind like her from early years, he had spent many of his days under the irksome restraints of a residential Institution. As a pupil at Swiss Cottage he had shewn industry and capacity above the ordinary and had risen to a subordinate position on the Staff. His main duties were the stereotyping of books in Lucas type, but zeal in this occupation did not prevent him from working out in his own mind a reasoned condemnation of the system under which he lived. He was a born partisan and his party was the blind.

To him the blind were inevitably in a hostile camp against the seeing at whose hands they suffered hardship and injustice. He was ready to work untiringly in the cause of the blind but would brook no interference, would scarcely tolerate advice from the seeing. He accepted Miss Gilbert's leadership loyally and without question, but had she not been blind he would never have become her willing agent.

In 1871 Levy appeared in the role of author with his Blindness and the Blind. This is a stout volume of over five hundred pages, chaotic in arrangement but encyclopaedic in scope. It is a compendium of a lifetime's observation and research and bears abundant witness to great industry and wide reading. Its contents range from the unpleasant habits of the ancients in regard to the blinding of their prisoners to the wonders of the newly invented ophthalmoscope. They include a chronological succession of biographies and a survey of the condition of the blind in nearly every country of the globe. It is a pity that this interesting book has never been reprinted as copies are now difficult to obtain.

Collaboration with Miss Gilbert began in 1853 when Levy furnished her with information about the blind of London and the two pondered long over the best means of improving the existing situation. The London Schools educated, trained, and then washed their hands of further responsibility. For those who went blind in mature life there was no provision at all. The adult blind to a deplorable extent seemed to be

either in workhouses or begging on the streets.

The plan evolved would nowadays be called a Home Workers' Scheme. In 1854 a cellar in Holborn was rented as a depot at 1/6 a week. Seven men who worked in their own homes came there for material and returned with their finished products being paid the full retail price less the cost of the material.

Levy's commencing salary was 2/6 a week, with a commission on sales. These he effected to the trade at wholesale prices. In spite of the moderate dimensions of the manager's salary the deficiency on the first year's working was £144 on a total expenditure of only £231. Nothing daunted, Miss Gilbert pushed on. After six months in the cellar and eight months in a second address the enterprise moved to Euston Road where a retail shop was opened and accommodation provided for training pupils in additional trades. Appeals were issued to the public for custom and financial support and The Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind was launched on the philanthropic world.

In 1875 two men and one woman were under training, 26 men and 9 women were employed in the Workshops and 21 men and women received work at their own homes. The Association moved to Berners Street in 1876 and to its present quarters in Tottenham Court Road in 1893.

In Liverpool similar causes led to similar results. A Home Teaching Society was instituted in that city in May 1857 and its operations disclosed the same needs as those experienced by the blind in London. Miss Wainwright, its Secretary,

employed a blind man and later a blind woman also to visit the sightless in their own homes. It was found that what was required most of all was employment for those who had been trained at Hardman Street and both training and employment for those who had gone blind in later life. Temporary premises were acquired in 1861 and twenty of the unemployed were given work. Stock accumulated so rapidly that a retail shop became a necessity and by means of the relief thus afforded the undertaking was enabled to expand. Miss Wainwright died in 1867 but by this time the Society was firmly established and grew uninterruptedly into the present splendid factory in Cornwallis Street where 175 men and women find an adequate environment for their working days.

Epoch-making enactments do not usually reach the Statute Book without much preliminary advertisement, convassing and debate and this was certainly so in regard to the Education Act of 1870. The blind world were fully alive to the implications of the impending legislation and made valiant efforts to secure the inclusion of blind children in the measure that was about to be proposed. In this worthy endeavour Miss Gilbert played a leading part and early in 1869 drafted a memorial for presentation to Mr. Gladstone's Government. She succeeded in gaining the co-operation of the Institutions, a rare feat in those days and submitted her manifesto in July as the unanimous petition of the blind world. A personal interview with My Lords was sought and granted. An influential deputation waited on

Lord de Grey and Mr. Forster in February, 1870, and pleaded powerfully the cause of the blind child. Twenty-nine Institutions were represented and many well-known members of Parliament took part. Lord Houghton introduced the visitors and argued that the blind should have "a fair share of protection and interest in any measure of general education." Lord de Grey replied sympathetically but excused the Government for not committing themselves on the well worn ground that it would be a dangerous precedent to give preferential treatment to any one class of the community.

It is a characteristic touch of those Victorian days that Miss Gilbert although the author and engineer of the whole enterprise had to wait with her lady friends, a prey to trepidation and suspense in the Westminster Palace Hotel while their lordly males were on the stage at Whitehall.

Mr. Forster's Bill became law. The blind were not mentioned, but neither were they excluded and as will be seen, the Act of 1870 had its due influence on the education of the blind. From the right to compulsory schooling the blind were not debarred and in several centres arrangements were made for their attendance at the newly established schools. The old arguments against segregation which had helped to entrench Roman type were brought into play in support of Day School attendance.

"The free intercourse with the seeing gives courage and self-reliance to the blind and a healthy stimulus which enables

them to compete more successfully with the seeing in after life than those who have been brought up altogether in blind Institutions."

"Blind children should be sent as early as possible, at least after seven or eight, to an ordinary sighted school, if not before to an infant school, and kept there at least till ten years of age. Objections may be raised by the teachers of ordinary day schools, to their assuming this additional responsibility, but their objections may be and have been overcome by a number of teachers who have taken the trouble to learn Braille and other types, and so qualify themselves for the work as not to interfere in any way with the performance of their ordinary duties."

Glasgow was the leader in this movement and speaking generally it had a greater vogue in the North than in the South, where London proved the exception to the rule by adopting the Board School system in a modified form.

The following paragraphs from the Royal Commission's Report (1889) although written some years after the establishment of the system, may be quoted here as giving a concise description of the method.

"The school boards at Bradford, Cardiff, Sunderland, and Glasgow have undertaken the education of the blind within their districts, and 61 children in all are under instruction in these towns, 28 being educated in different schools in Glasgow alone. In most cases the children follow the ordinary time-table with their seeing companions, and associate with them both in school

time and play time, Bradford and Sunderland being the only exceptions to this. On the occasion of the visit of the Commissioners to Glasgow, the school board and their teachers expressed themselves as satisfied with the success of the experiment of educating the blind with the seeing in the board schools."

"In London the blind children usually attend the ordinary day schools, and share as far as possible, in the instruction there given; but they also, on specified days, receive special instruction at centres, of which there are 18. The attendance of these centres ranges from three to 15. The total number under instruction at Lady-day 1888 was 132. The children are examined with the other scholars at the annual Government examinations of the ordinary day schools which they attend. At Lady-day 1888 the staff consisted of a superintendent and five female assistantes, all of whom had been trained at the Royal Normal College."

In 1874 the Charity Organisation Society appointed a Committee to consider what could be done to improve the condition of the blind and particularly to inquire into the steps that were necessary to promote better industrial training and more adequate employment. Representative members were appointed from the ranks of workers among the blind all over the country and the ground was thoroughly explored. The Committee met thirty-nine times and their recommendations shew a clear appreciation of the situation and an energetic desire

to remedy the gravest of its shortcomings. They seemed to have felt, however, that their findings would not have sufficient weight to secure the necessary reforms and pressed for the appointment of a Royal Commission to go still more fully into the question.

The six headings into which they divided their problem were as follows:-

I. What is being done industrially for the Blind, and in what ways -

(a) For children.
(b) For untrained adults.
(c) For trained adults.

II. What more can be done through existing agencies?

(a) By improvements in system of working.
(b) By opening up new employments.
(c) By co-operation amongst the agencies.

III. What new agencies, if any, are required?

IV. To what extent can the Blind become self-supporting?

V. What provision at present exists for the support of the Blind not able to maintain themselves by their own industry, and what improvements, if any, are desirable in the system on which funds for this purpose are administered?

VI. To what extent should the education and training of the Blind be provided for from the rates or other public sources?

The Committee put forward proposals which were in part applicable to the whole Country and which in part grappled more

particularly with the Metropolitan problem. They found that there were overlapping and lack of co-operation and suggested a general Council of representative experts. They wanted trading accounts kept properly with no admixture of the charitable element. In the same spirit they contended that goods made by the blind should be sold in the open market at competitive prices and that the wages paid should correspond with the economic value of the work done. They found, of course, that a great increase was required both in the number of training and of workshop places. The United Kingdom could boast at that time of only 800 workshop employees. The Committee considered that the Guardians of the Poor should be persuaded to make fuller use of their powers in the matter of paying training fees and that general action in this direction would be accelerated by State inspection of training centres and workshops. The number of blind men and women employed in the London workshops was only 150 and stress was laid on the need for co-operative buying, a central agency and a depot for samples. The Committee did not confine itself to the industrial problem. It was strongly in favour of blind children being sent to the ordinary Board schools and recommended that special attention should be given to sensible personal training during the first five years of life.

In some of the recommendations of the C.O.S. Report, it is not difficult to recognise the constructive energy of Dr. Armitage who served on the Committee and who must now have fuller notice.

Thomas Rhodes Armitage is one of the great figures in the education of the blind. By single minded devotion, by knowledge and sagacity, by incessant missionary effort and by the expenditure of a large fortune, he brought about a new era in blind education and left a deep and lasting imprint on the methods by which that education was carried on.

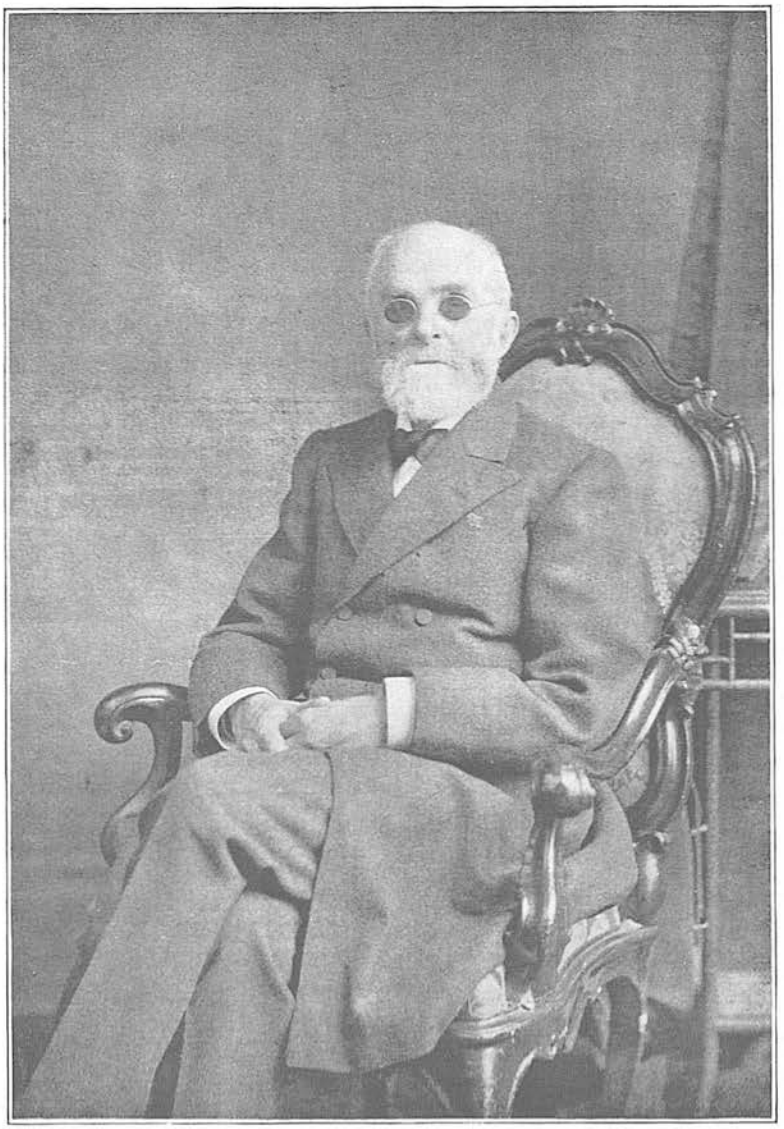
He was born in 1824 and spent much of his youth in France and Germany. The mastery of French and German thus acquired was of great service to him in later years when he was as much at home on the Conference platform in Dresden, Berlin or Paris as he was in London or Boston.

He qualified as a doctor of medicine and for some years practised in London. His sight, which had always been weak, however, became worse and he gave up medicine in 1860 and thenceforward devoted himself and his inherited wealth to the service of the blind. He reformed the Indigent Blind Visiting Society and made it an efficient instrument for the relief of distress among the poor blind of London.

After this introduction to the world of the blind Armitage extended his investigations to cover the whole field. The attempt to secure a solution to two aspects of the problem was to constitute his life work. The first was the need for better education and the second the need for more general employment. His labours for education led to the founding in 1868 of the British and Foreign Blind Association, now The National Institute for the Blind. The purpose of the

Association was to be a central authority and clearing house in all matters and particularly in matters educational. The selection of Braille as the universal type was its first important piece of work and soon it settled down to the useful task of the production of books, writing frames, maps and other educational apparatus.

Armitage soon found that the problems of education and of employment were intimately connected and the Normal College was in a sense his answer to both. He had been struck by the facts that the Paris School was securing successes in the after careers of its music pupils to the extent of thirty per cent and that the English Schools had totally failed in this respect. He contended that any Institution which cared to devote special attention to the physical training of its pupils and to securing the best possible music teaching would secure results comparable to Paris. As none of the existing schools were willing to act on his advice he took the opportunity of engaging Francis Campbell of Boston to carry out his designs. The experiment completely justified his hopes. Campbell who lived to become the leading figure among teachers of the blind and who died in 1914 full of years and honours was undoubtedly the right man for the enterprise. Himself a blind man, he had secured the post of music teacher in the Perkins' Institution in 1861 and by energy and hard work had made his department a success. He had come to Europe in 1869 to recruit his health and to pursue his musical studies at Leipsic.



Francis Joseph Campbell 1832–1914

LL.D. of Glasgow Univ. Knighted in 1909.

On his homeward journey in 1871 he met Armitage, was quickly enthusiastic over his proposals and threw himself with ardour into this pioneer work. £1,000 was obtained from Henry Gardner and with another thousand from Armitage's own purse the College was opened with two pupils on a corner of its present site. It grew rapidly and its fame spread far and wide. The two factors of sound physical training and of the most distinguished music teaching that could be obtained were always characteristic marks of its curriculum and the high reputation of the College ~~reached~~ reacted in attracting to itself the best blind talent of the Country.

The other side of Armitage's work for the better employment of the blind consisted in a crusade among the Institutions to induce them to include after care among their activities and to help their pupils to self-support by the adoption of the Saxon System. This system like Miss Gilbert's early efforts can best be described as a Home Workers' Scheme. The Dresden Institution trained its pupils in basket, brush and rope making and the like, and when the training was over each returned to his native town or village. He was supplied by the Institution with an initial equipment and with material at cost price and was assisted in the sale of his wares. Local markets were encouraged, but when this was impossible the goods were bought in by Dresden. To encourage perseverance a grant of about £5 a year was made to each worker, the amount varying according to his needs. Armitage failed to secure the adoption of the

system in this Country. He pressed its claims with his usual insistence and pertinacity, but the conservatism of the Institutions was too strong for him. It was not until fifty years later in 1920 under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and with the stimulus of Treasury Grants that the Saxon System took root in Britain.

Armitage's work in connection with the adoption of Braille by the Institutions of Britain, Europe and America has already been noted. In 1870 he published the first edition of his book The Education and Employment of the Blind and in 1886 brought out a second and enlarged edition. In it can be found a clear picture of his missionary labours and a useful glimpse of the world of the blind as it struck an informed and deeply interested observer. Armitage has a gift for clear exposition, a talent not granted to all who write about the blind and his volume can still be read with profit and enjoyment. It is accurate in statement and sagacious in counsel. Time, which awards inexorable verdicts, has justified the author in most of his contemtions.

The third quarter of the Century was, as has been explained, a period of questioning and self-criticism but this seems to have accelerated rather than retarded progress. The first ten years of the last quarter shewed, indeed, a marked advance. For this period there are, fortunately, some interesting statistics in a publication by Mr. William Harris of Leicester. In the year 1866 that gentleman with Mr. Mansfield Turner, had brought out for private circulation A Guide to Institutions

and Charities for the Blind. This compilation was so acceptable that a public edition was called for in 1870 and a second edition was issued fourteen years later. In the preface to the 1884 edition the editors took the opportunity of making some striking comparisons. In the year 1870 the goods made by the blind realised, in England, the sum of £33,598 and in Scotland £21,930. By 1883 the turnover had risen to £73,865 and £39,564 respectively. In 1870 the income of the Institutions and Workshops from charitable sources was, in England, £31,273, in Scotland £7,943. By 1883 these figures had grown to £56,448 and £14,021 respectively. It is further stated that in 1883 the number of Institution inmates was, in England, 1,298, in Scotland 161, while the number of workshop employees was, in England 782 and, in Scotland, 330.

CHAPTER VI

STATE AID FOR EDUCATION

Chapter VI

It has been abundantly shewn that the British Institutions, while each retained characteristic features, bore a strong family resemblance to one another and that programme and methods were fairly uniform. In spite of this there was little conscious co-operation and even in the Continental schools which about 1850 were probably ahead of those in Britain there was little feeling of professional solidarity. This, however, grew rapidly in the last quarter of the century and gave rise to a number of Conferences where common problems were frankly discussed and standard doctrines formulated. The first general meeting of this kind was held at Vienna in 1873 and was followed by one at Dresden in 1876, one at Berlin in 1879, one at Frankfort in 1882, one at Amsterdam in 1885 and one at Cologne in 1888.

The consensus of opinion revealed and forwarded by the first four of these Conferences was summarised in 1883 by Herr Moldenhawer of Copenhagen as follows:-

"In Germany the Congresses have led to the discussion of different questions, and we may say that it has been generally acknowledged that blind men who can gain their living by work ought not to be received into asylums or hospitals, but to go out into the world to work and gain their bread; that the education of blind children ought not to commence later than that of seeing children; and that preparatory schools are the best means of taking care of small blind children, and give

the best guarantee for a proper treatment; that it is not right to prefer music to the handicrafts, but that in each case the practical result to be gained for the individual is to be looked upon; that it is a duty to let all qualified blind children learn something useful; and that it is not sufficient to let a certain number be received into blind schools while the rest grow up in ignorance. It has been agreed that a thoroughly good education is even more necessary to the blind than to the seeing, that they may become capable of getting a correct idea of the world, and of living amongst their seeing fellow-creatures; that drilling is of the greatest significance for the development of the blind, not only of their body, but also of their character and will; that a literature for the blind ought to be founded; that a common alphabet ought to be adopted by all blind schools; and that the Braille system is best qualified to be generally used, not only as alphabet, but also for music. It has been acknowledged that blind persons who will try to gain their living by their work ought to be assisted, and that an assistance leading to independence can be given in no better way than by being put in connection with the institutions, where the blind have got their education and are best known; and that the assistance ought always to be given with a practical aim, and with a mutual wish to gain independence as most honourable to the blind as it is to the seeing.

With regard to the question of blind children being

educated in common schools for the seeing, I think that all agree that it is only a means to be employed in the absence of something better, since in ordinary schools so much is wanting of what belongs to the first conditions of a good education of the blind. If, in a large town, where there are many blind children, their reception in a common home is considered undesirable, it is preferable to have a special day-school for the blind, like that at Berlin. But for the large number of blind children living in the country and the small towns, it is necessary to have a sufficient number of preparatory schools and institutions, and the necessary means for receiving not only all those who are of the right age for being admitted to an Institution, but also those blind children who are not old enough to be received there, and who can not be educated at home so carefully as they ought to be. For those, too, who are too old to be received into a school, there needs much more doing than hitherto has been attempted.

It is to be hoped that the Congresses and the general interest in the condition of the blind awakened by them may occasion the erection of primary preparatory schools, and of institutions for the blind, sufficient for giving all qualified blind children a suitable education; so that no blind man, who wishes to work for his bread, shall be incapable of doing it for want of the necessary assistance from his fellow beings, from the community, and from Government."

The paragraphs above quoted were read at the first

British Conference, that held at York to mark the jubilee of the School in that city. It lasted from the 16th to the 26th July, 1883, and attracted to it most of the leading figures in the blind world of the day - Armitage and Campbell attended from London, Martin and Neil from Edinburgh, Forster and Marston from Worcester, Wood from Sheffield, Brunton and Bryson from Liverpool, McCormick and Humphries from Manchester, Harris from Leicester, Macdonald from Dundee and Miss Mary Hobson from Belfast. York itself was ably represented by Mr. Munby who held the post of Hon. Secretary of the Institution till his death in 1914 and Mr. Buckle its energetic Principal.

The topics discussed ranged from industrial employment to higher education. They were handled with vigour, and an outspoken divergence of opinion often added piquancy to the discussions. The reforms propounded were far in advance of current practice and the whole tone of the Conference manifested a keen desire for progress. The same topics have appeared on many programmes since and are now discussed by men unknown in 1883, but finality is still to seek.

Before the next Conference met the Royal Commission had begun and finished its work, but it may be well to sacrifice chronology to convenience and give here a list of successive British meetings.

London (Norwood) 1890
Birmingham 1894
London (Westminster) 1902
Edinburgh 1905

Manchester 1908

Exeter 1911

London (Westminster) 1914

Shortly before the York Conference, the blind of England and Wales had a substantial fortune left for their benefit. This came from Mr. Henry Gardner, a wealthy citizen of London whose interest in the blind had been aroused, it is said, by a partial failure of his own sight in advancing years. Gardner died in 1879 and by his will left £10,000 to each of three London Institutions, The School for the Indigent Blind, at St.George's, The London Society, at Swiss Cottage, and The Association for the General Welfare of the Blind, now at Tottenham Court Road. Generous though these bequests were, they were dwarfed by the testamentary establishment of a special Trust for the blind with a capital of £300,000. A scheme for the administration of the interest on this large sum was drawn up at the instance of the Court of Chancery in 1882. Some modifications were introduced in 1894 and the Trust's income, after the payment of necessary expenses, is now allocated in the following manner:-

1. Two ninths to instruction in Music
2. Two ninths to instruction in other professions and in Handicrafts
3. Two ninths in pensions
4. Three ninths left to the discretion of the Committee.

Its first Secretary was Henry J. Wilson who retired in 1920 after nearly 40 years' service. Wilson was a man of tact, courtesy and unaffected zeal in the welfare of the blind. As

the years passed, his friendly offices were more and more sought as confidant and chairman. He stood apart from inter-institutional jealousies. Neither he nor the Trust had any axe to grind. His rooms were neutral territory and they became to an increasing extent the meeting place of the blind world. Innumerable gatherings were held there and not a few movements had their inception round his table.

"Some general enquiry into the condition of the blind" to use a phrase from one of John Bright's letters was beginning to be recognised as necessary and in July 1884 the final push was given by a conference called at the instance of the Duke of Westminster in Grosvenor House. Exactly a year later a Royal Commission was set up "to investigate the report upon the condition of the blind in the United Kingdom, the various systems of the education of the blind, elementary, technical and professional at home and abroad and the existing Institutions for that purpose, the employments open to and suitable for the blind and the means by which education may be extended so as to increase the number of blind persons qualified for such employments."

The reconstitution of the Commission with the extension of its reference to the Deaf and Imbeciles in the following year did not affect its work as far as the blind were concerned although it was unfortunate in that it gave State recognition to the vicious bracketting of blind with deaf. Its Report was published in July 1889 and the bulky record of its four years' labours is a document of permanent value. No

such comprehensive survey of the world of the blind has been made either before or since and for the student it will always remain a vast mine of accurate information. Dr. Armitage was a member and his hand can be traced in many of its recommendations.

The Report is not in every particular as he would have written it. He himself gloomily calls it "the best compromise possible under the circumstances" but this hardly does justice to his masterful spirit for the Report is, to a notable extent, the expression of his own convictions and his own policy thought out and expounded in the book previously referred to fifteen years before the Commission began its work.

The condition of things revealed by the investigations of the Commission were disheartening enough. Of six thousand blind individuals then interrogated more than half although trained in Institutions were contributing nothing towards their livelihood while of the rest the majority were earning only a few shillings. Of those trained in music and piano tuning a negligible proportion only were doing anything to maintain themselves. Judged by the industrial success of their pupils the Institutions had unmistakably failed. For this there could be no justification. It was not that the Institutions were putting before themselves an unworldly aim of education or setting commercial standards at nought. They trained in industrial occupations with the end that the pupils might earn their living thereby and so stood condemned on their own shewing. It may be that too much time was spent, as Dr. Howe had alleged many years earlier, in showy attainments which

had little value in education or in money. It certainly was true as the Commission pointed out that much could be done to improve the standard and the thoroughness of the training given, but above all the need was for continuing care and specialised supervision during the years after school, a need which is now universally recognised but which in those days, except at Dresden, was not above the horizon.

With such evidence before it the Commission pressed naturally for the improvement of technical training, a great increase in Workshop accommodation and the general adoption of the Saxon System. It wanted to release charitable funds for the assistance of the adult and aged blind and recommended that responsibility for education and training should be laid upon the State. Compulsory attendance at School should be enforced on blind children from 5 to 16 years. "From 16 to 21 the School Authority should have the power and the duty to assist all necessitous blind persons to maintain themselves while learning a trade. Those who become blind from 21 to 50 should equally receive help from the School Authority." It recommended co-operation among Pensions Societies. It held that the State should provide liberally for the aged blind and that Boards of Guardians should be generous with out-relief.

The Commission's Report is a historic landmark. It is a monument of the best opinion of the day on all aspects of the blind problem. Much of its advice has been ratified by events and on the strength of its recommendations the 1890 and 1893 Education Acts were added to the Statute Book. The main

direction in which later opinion has departed from the Report is in requiring State assistance for services concerned with the adult blind. The discussion of that subject, however, belongs to the next chapter and it will be more convenient to attempt here an outline of work among the children till the present day and to trace the action of the State on their behalf.

During the last generation a great step forward has been taken in the physical training of the blind. In the early days of the Institutions, nothing had been attempted in this direction. If the scholars were adequately fed, clothed and lodged it was felt that their physical needs had been met. Dancing was not thought of as a possible relaxation and even if it had been deemed practicable it would have been ruled out on other grounds. Even after 1870 when the drill-sergeant was assuming his sway in the most up-to-date schools for ordinary children and the Normal College was shewing the way to other schools for the blind, drill and dancing would have been regarded as fads and fancies. Contemporary evidence is the surest test of all such generalisations. The following was written in 1883 about one of the largest and most influential of the Institutions of the country. "Nothing has yet been done for the physical education of the blind children. The girls still continue high and round shouldered and stooping; no backs are yet to be seen on the forms on which they sit for hours daily, in stooping positions. As the Committee have means for

providing backs to the seats, and for introducing all those means which contribute to the improvement of the physique of the blind, it is a painful duty to be obliged to mention publicly the apparently utter neglect of physical training." The condition of the London Day Centres at the same time was not much better. "The physique of the blind children (in these schools) is utterly neglected; gymnastic models have been lent to the Superintendent of the blind children under the School Board, who is devoted to her work; but there is not enough space in the little rooms (where usually a few blind children are collected) for them to stretch out their arms while standing. This want of space has been mentioned as a cause why they could not even make an attempt at introducing some elementary exercises."

A companion picture written by another hand in the same year will ring true to readers of a later date. If blind children"are left to their own resources, the normal condition will be to have a blind companion linked on either arm, or more if there is room, and to tramp, tramp, backwards and forwards, till the bell rings for school or dinner. During this march the tongues wag furiously, and it is curious to see in what a summary manner any obstacle is removed which may happen to get in their way."

There was probably a larger gap between the physical training of the Board Schools, poor as it was, and that of the schools for the blind than in any other part of the educational programme. The staffs were still willing to accept the

superficial view that blindness must preclude hard or systematic exercise. The normal child derived most of his physical training from the games of the playground and the massed drill affected him little either for good or ill. It was the playground more than the drill sergeant that the blind child missed. In history and geography his teacher strove to minimise and overcome the obstacles which blindness put in the way of his learning, but on the side of sport and games his teacher acquiesced in the inevitability of inaction.

To all this the physical care of the pupils in a School of to-day presents a notable contrast. The drill is under the care of qualified teachers who have had several years training in a specialised college. Remedial exercises now form an important feature in the care of blind children. The proportion of entrants to a School who suffer from postural or structural defects is surprisingly high, but to a great extent these can be and are rectified by proper treatment. Dancing is a favourite pastime in every school and many blind children have extensive repertoires of country, folk and even sword dances. To these must be added the exhilaration of organised games in the playground with country walks and gardening. The hygiene of the pupils is better than it used to be. The dietary table is more carefully constructed and the clothing made more simple and light. The ophthalmic surgeon visits periodically and treatment that might improve the eyesight is at once prescribed. The dentist, too, is a

valued member of the staff and by his preservative treatment secures to the youngsters much health and comfort that, without his care, would be inevitably lost.

The Royal Commission reported, as has been stated, in July, 1889, and exactly twelve months later Bills for the education of blind and deaf children in England and in Scotland were introduced into the House of Lords. Lord Cranbrook, who held office in the Conservative administration of Lord Salisbury as Minister for Education, or as the post was then called Lord President of the Council on Education, had charge of the bills and his chief though friendly and constructive critic was the Earl of Kimberley the peer who succeeded Cranbrook as Minister when the Liberals came into office in 1892. The Scottish Bill was read a third time on the 1st August and sent to the Commons where it finished its uneventful course in the Autumn and came into force on 1st January, 1891. The English Bill passed its Committee stage in the Lords but never reached its third reading in that Parliament. It was recommitted three years later and on the 25th July, 1893, with Lord Kimberley in charge of its fortunes, it was read a first time. The debates on the second reading and Committee stages were very similar to those of three years earlier with Lord Sandford in the role of chief opposition critic. This time the Bill had a safe passage through the Commons. It received the Royal assent on the 12th September and came into force on the 1st January, 1894. This Statute known as the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf

Children) Act, 1893, consists of eighteen clauses and aimed at extending to blind and deaf children the education made generally compulsory by the Act of 1870.

"The efficient elementary instruction which under the Elementary Education Act, 1876, a parent must cause his child to receive, shall, in the case of a blind or deaf child, be construed as including instruction suitable to such a child, and the fact of a child being blind or deaf shall not of itself, except in the case of a deaf child under sevem years of age, be a reasonable excuse for not causing the child to attend school, or for neglecting to provide efficient elementary instruction for the child."

"It shall be the duty of every school authority, as defined by this Act, to enable blind and deaf children resident in their district, for whose elementary education efficient and suitable provision is not otherwise made, to obtain such education in some school for the time being certified by the Education Department as suitable for providing such education, and for that purpose either to establish or acquire and to maintain a school so certified, or to contribute, on such terms and to such extent as may be approved by the Education Department, towards the establishment or enlargement, alteration and maintenance of a school so certified, or towards any of these purposes, and, where necessary or expedient, to make arrangements, subject to regulations of the Education Department, for boarding out any blind or deaf child in a home conveniently near to the certified school where the child is receiving elementary

education."

The existing Institutions had an immediate accession of junior pupils. For these fees were paid by the Education Authority that sent them and in respect of them a grant was paid by the Treasury. Many of the Institutions had a system of election to free places by subscribers' votes and this method was only slowly given up. It was not uncommon to find in the same school, free pupils admitted on this basis and pupils for whom fees were paid by a School Board.

Although the School Boards readily accepted their new responsibilities, attendance officers had to be educated up to the idea that blind children should be sent to school even when this meant separation from parents. The age of five was felt by many Institutions and most parents to be too young and even after the lapse of thirty years the average age of admission is much higher than it should be. In this respect districts vary widely. As might be expected the large towns are ahead of the country areas.

The paying of fees to the existing voluntary schools was the principal way in which the Education Authorities discharged their obligations under the Act. The Schools were certified and inspected by the Board of Education and this led to many improvements in accommodation and equipment as well as in method and level of instruction. In some cases the insistence by the Board on what it considered necessary reforms led to the relinquishment by the Institutions of its elementary department.

This was the case in Nottingham, Norwich and Plymouth though it should be noted that it took eight years or more to bring about this step. In Bolton, Burnley, Cardiff, Leicester, Manchester, Nottingham and Oldham the Education Authority opened day schools for the blind children of these Boroughs. Education Authorities combined for the purpose of establishing residential schools in Stoke-on-Trent and Gorleston-on-Sea, but unfortunately these were designed for both deaf and blind. The School Board of Leeds took the same ill-advised step and opened a combined residential School. Blind and Deaf go well together on paper. They are both a special item in the general programme of national or municipal education. It is almost inevitable that they should be thrown together in Schemes and Regulations. From these it is an easy step to meet their needs by housing and schooling them together. In reality there is little in common between the educational problem presented by the blind and that of the deaf. Both have more points in common with the normal child than they have with one another. In practice, too, it is difficult to mete out equal justice to the two sections. The School is apt to become lop sided. As the blind are usually in the minority they are in danger of becoming a mere appendage of a School for the Deaf. For the same reason the Headmaster has for the most part had his training and experience among the deaf so that the blind again find themselves without an equal place in the sun. In many respects, a combination of Education Authorities is an admirable body for the carrying out of the provisions of the Act and it is

to be regretted that no large Schools for the Blind were thus established and maintained.

In London the School Board took over in 1902 the elementary department of the School for the Indigent Blind, and limiting it to blind boys from 13 to 16 years of age set up a corresponding School for girls in West Norwood. The younger children were taught in day centres which had been opened, as previously explained, several years prior to the passing of the Act.

Before 1894 it had been either a privilege or a private expense to secure elementary education for a blind child. Thus it came about that only those who were considered fit through natural aptitude to profit substantially by the teaching were sent to school. Under the Act this standard of discrimination was lowered. Any blind child, if above the level of mental deficiency, was admissible. Thus teachers who were at work in the early nineties complained that the Act had had a bad effect on the intellectual attainments of their classes. This, however, was a passing phase of only local interest while the merits of the Statute were solid and unquestionable. All blind children were to be sent to School with their charges laid to a great extent on public instead of on charitable funds. Existing schools were extended and improved. New Schools were opened and the Board of Education used its influence steadily for thirty years in the direction of progress and efficiency.

The pupils over the age of 16 had still to be given free places by the Institution or were paid for privately or by

Boards of Guardians. The number in the last named category steadily increased as the obligation of the community towards its weaker members became more generally accepted, but at the same time it was widely felt that the Poor Law was not the appropriate authority for such a duty.

In 1902 an Act was passed which made considerable changes in Local Government as well as in Education. The School Boards were swept away and Committees of Local Authorities took their place. Elementary Education became the business of fairly small units of Government but the work of higher education was confined to County Councils and County Borough Councils.

"The Local Education Authority shall consider the educational needs of their area and take such steps as seem to them desirable, after consultation with the Board of Education, to supply or aid the supply of education other than elementary."

The phrase "other than elementary" was, after a few years' argument, accepted as covering the technical instruction of blind pupils and the Board of Education began in 1905 to certify as "Day Technical Classes" those Institutions which had training Departments.

In 1907 the Medical Branch of the Board of Education came into existence and a work of fundamental value to the young people of the country was begun. Unfortunately the pernicious desire of the bureaucrat for a tidy paper arrangement again came into play. To the ordinary man, blindness and other disabilities suggest pathology rather than education. Even to

the average educationalist occupied with the great problems of how best to train the myriad sturdy youngsters of the nation special schools are an uninteresting side line with which he does not wish to be concerned. Thus it came about that the Medical Branch whose function was the supervision of the medical inspection and treatment of children had pushed into its care the inspection of Special Schools. As far as Schools for the Blind were concerned, this transfer did violence to educational considerations. Such Institutions do not require more medical inspection than ordinary schools while the curriculum and methods of instruction are closely akin. The Staffs are ordinary teachers and their work is entirely pedagogical. To decree that that work shall be inspected by members of another profession is indefensible. It should be noted that the Medical Branch, like the Board itself, is limited to England and that in Scotland Special Schools remain under the general control of the Education Department.

In 1907 and 1912 there were founded two bodies whose common object was the advancement of the education of the blind. These were the College of Teachers and the Association of Teachers of the Blind. The College has since 1908 conducted examinations and granted diplomas to teachers in schools for the blind. The securing of this Diploma is made a condition of permanent recognition by the Board of Education. Its Regulation is in the following terms "Teachers may be recognised provisionally as Assistant Teachers in Schools for

Blind children for a period of two years from the date of their appointment, pending their passing an examination approved by the Board in the methods of teaching in Schools for Blind Children."

The Association was started, as has been said, in 1912 and soon became a professional body of considerable strength and influence. It is divided, for convenience of meeting, into three Branches and publishes a magazine called The Teacher of the Blind. The College and the Association were amalgamated in 1924. During the last twenty years the status and qualifications of the teacher have greatly improved. The proportion of Certificated Teachers has increased along with knowledge of the special methods applicable to blind children. In 1908 it was found, as a result of the first examination of the College, that not a few teachers had been at work for years without having taken the trouble to master Braille. This would now be impossible.

From 1902 to 1918 nothing affecting the education of the blind was added to the Statute Book, but in the latter year the great enactment of Mr. Fisher put into statutory form many changes that had long been desired by educationalists. One of the guiding principles underlying the Act was that education and training should not be denied to a likely student on account of poverty. It therefore extended the powers of Local Authorities to give maintenance grants to pupils while in training. This was of great advantage to blind adults who might need a course of instruction in some industrial occupation and who were

without means of support. The maximum amount of such grant was 30/- a week.

In 1921 an important piece of legislation was passed which codified all the education Acts since 1870 repealing eighteen enactments in whole, seven almost in whole and six in part. This now forms the legislative basis of the national system of education in England and so is to teachers an indispensable book of reference. (The paragraphs which deal with blind children (clauses 61 to 69) will be found in an Appendix).

It has been said that from 1894 fees were chargeable by Institutions against Education Authorities. In addition to these fees, the Institutions were paid a Treasury grant in respect of each pupil in regular attendance. These payments were first made in accordance with the Minute of 2nd April, 1894. The terms of the Minute empowered the Board or, as it was then called, the Department to pay at the rate of £3: 3: 0 a year in respect of each child who "has received with due regularity efficient elementary education" and further at the rate of £2: 2: 0 a year for each child who "has received satisfactory instruction and made satisfactory progress in some course of manual instruction or industrial training approved by the Department." The ordinary curriculum of a School for blind children providing as it usually did both elementary education and manual training enabled most Schools to claim from the Department at the rate of £5: 5: 0 per pupil.

These rates continued in force for twenty years. They

were amended by the Minute of 17th July, 1914, which provided that the grant payable each year to a certified School for blind children would be at the rate of £7 in respect of each day pupil and at the rate of £13 in respect of each resident pupil.

As from the 1st April, 1919, in accordance with the provisions of the 1918 Act (Clause 44) and as outlined in the Minute of 15th February, 1918, a substantial change was made in the method and amount of Treasury payments. The grant of £13 has been increased to £16: 10: 0 but is only retained in respect of pupils who are not sent to Schools by an Education Authority. In other words, those pupils who are paid for by parents or by such bodies as Boards of Guardians continue to be grant earning while those sent by Education Authorities cease to be so. Instead of payments direct to the Institution in respect of these children a payment of half the expenditure that has been incurred is made to the Education Authority by the Board. The School now charges to the Education Authority a fee which may approach but must not equal the actual cost of the maintenance and education of the pupil while the Education Authority recovers half of this sum from the Board. This method holds good whether the pupil is resident or day, elementary or technical.

In Scotland the method is different and cannot be stated quite so simply. The Department still pays grants to all Schools for the Blind. "Education Authorities which have

schools of their own receive grants as they do for ordinary schools. To schools not under an Education Authority a grant is paid not exceeding the deficit of funds required to meet the approved expenditure of the school in each year as determined by the Department after crediting (a) contributions received within that year from Education Authorities for the education or maintenance of individual pupils, (b) fees, or contributions in relief of fees, and (c) revenue from endowments or other local sources including any contributions from an Education Authority to the school in terms of Section 9 (1) of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918. This grant shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, exceed in amount the revenue under (c)." Under Section 9 above referred to "Education Authorities may make a payment towards the maintenance of any School within its area on condition, (1) that the teachers are remunerated at a rate not lower than the rate for teachers of similar qualifications employed by the Authority, and (2) that there is a reasonable representation of the Authority on the governing body."

From the time when the Board of Education assumed jurisdiction over Schools for the Blind in 1894 it strove consistently and with success for their improvement and advance. By the funds at its disposal it had consolidated the position of the voluntary schools and secured as the price of that assistance a standard of teaching and equipment which put these schools on a level with the general educational service of the country. In

1921, however, the panic "economies" of the Geddes Committee put a sudden brake on progress and indeed brought about actual retrogression in some directions. In that year the Treasury threatened a curtailment of financial support. In January 1922 the Board passed on the threat. It told Local Authorities (Circular 1246) that it "must restrict its expenditure in making provision for the blind during the year 1922-3 to the figures incurred in 1921-2." As the education and, more particularly, the industrial training of the blind were at this time rapidly growing services the policy outlined led to vigorous protests and was eventually abandoned though in a grudging and half hearted fashion. A year later Circular 1298 saw the light. This unfortunate document called forth energetic remonstrances from the College and the Association but this time without avail. The Circular foreshadowed new Regulations for Special Schools which would have the effect of increasing the size of classes and of lowering the standard of qualifications in the teaching staffs. Before the Regulations were issued in 1925, action had been taken on the strength of the Circular alone and the staffs of several Schools had been reduced. Fortunately, by the close of 1926 better days were already in sight and it may, with some degree of hope be predicted, that before long the Board will again assume its role of stimulation and encouragement.

CHAPTER VII

LATER BRAILLE AND BRAILLE BOOKS

Chapter VII

In contrast to the tranquility reached in Britain with the acceptance of a revised Braille code in 1905, the position in America has been one of continuous and strenuous activity. In 1900 the Missouri School which had been the rallying point of British Braille threw in its lot with "modified" or as it was then renamed "American" Braille. Shortly before this a Committee of three had been appointed to study the type problem in the interests of uniformity. This was the forerunner of the Uniform Type Committee of the American Association of Workers for the Blind which began its labours in 1905 and broke all records in type investigation before it was dissolved ten years later.

In 1911 it decided that its researches must include the results of practical tests in the various systems and Miss Howard with the assistance of Mrs. Fowler was appointed to carry out the work. The tests themselves were cleverly arranged so that the results from any one set gave a clear indication of the answer to this or that crucial question. "Are characters of few dots easier to read than characters of many?" "What size of dot is the most legible?" These are two out of the many questions which the readers of America and Britain had to answer, not by their preconceived ideas but by actual reading of specially prepared sheets. The ladies travelled 15,000 miles in the States, Canada and Britain and gathered statistics from 12,000 readers. New York Point, American Braille and Revised Braille were all subjected to this great inquisition. The various tests had been devised with

the greatest care and ingenuity. The enquiry was above suspicion of favouring any one system. The Report which embodied the final result was presented to the Association of Workers of the Blind at its Conference in June 1913 and aroused the greatest interest. To the surprise of many Revised Braille came out the best. The Committee therefore pleaded for the adoption of the original Braille alphabet as a universal medium while pointing out the desirability of securing modifications in its contractions.

The supporters of original Braille were the smallest of the three contending sections in America and it was inevitable that the suggestion to scrap New York Point and American Braille in its favour should meet with a lukewarm reception. If scrapping had to be done let it be in favour of a system which would be better than anything yet formulated. The ideal system might have the old Braille alphabet but "frequency" the characteristic of both American Braille and New York Point and the variable base, the proud distinction of New York Point must be essential factors in the system. The Americans felt that it would be well to enlist the sympathetic interest of the home country in their enterprise and dispatched Mr. H. Randolph Latimer to pave the way for the universal adoption of an ideally perfect system. Much friendly conference took place in 1914 but Britain had still refused to commit herself when in the summer of 1915 the new system under the name of Standard Dot was expounded to a great Conference on the Pacific

Coast. The War had prevented a deputation of British experts from attending and had drawn attention from embossed literature to matters of more vital moment, but even had there been no War it is unlikely that the merits of Standard Dot would have led to the abandonment by Great Britain, of Revised Braille. The difficulties in the way of acceptance were outlined by Mr. W.M. Stone of Edinburgh in an Article contributed to The Teacher of the Blind in September 1915. There had been no time to judge Standard Dot on its merits and Mr. Stone contented himself with pointing out that if it were adopted in Great Britain certain consequences would follow and should be frankly faced. All users of Braille, not only the blind but voluntary writers as well, would have to learn an entirely new system. Existing stocks of books, and these were considerable, would have to be scrapped. Expense would be involved in altering stereotyping machines which were not, in their present form, capable of printing Standard Dot and lastly Great Britain would be isolated from the rest of Europe. Mr. Latimer replied to this Article in the following month from Baltimore and wisely concentrated on one testing question. "Given that the Standard Dot System is all its promoters claim for it" he wrote, "are the advocates of the existing system justified in adopting it as the Uniform Type for the blind of the English speaking world."

Mr. Stone made his rejoinder in December and while maintaining the friendly and even cordial tone of the correspondence he summed up so authoritatively against the

adoption of the American theoretically perfect system that no further defence was attempted. Is the gain commensurate with the sacrifice that would be demanded? "What is it that you claim for Standard Dot?" he asked in a telling passage. "I know what you will reply: Uniformity, increase of accuracy, increase of speed. Well, we want uniformity, we want it badly: but we think there are other ways of reaching it. There would be uniformity if you adopted British Braille. There are more readers of British Braille than of any other system of punctography. People frequently talk as if British Braille was the concern only of those living in the British Isles. It is the System of the Blind of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, and India. It is as nearly identical with the Braille of European countries as differences of language make possible, and it is actually read by great numbers in every European country. Therefore, if uniformity is to be the great gain, it is only reasonable to ask you to conform to our system. With regard to increase of accuracy, I must candidly say I think that accuracy after reaching a certain point is of little importance. I find that Blind people, children or adults, read quite as accurately as seeing people. And the gain you show in accuracy is so very small - only 2 per cent. You see I am accepting your figures; but it must be remembered they are only theoretically obtained; no actual tests between the two systems have been taken. There remains speed, which is equivalent to fluency. I think this is much more important than accuracy,

for without ease there is no pleasure, and without pleasure there is little real reading. Well, what is your claim for this point? Only a gain of 6 per cent. It comes to this, then, as far as I have been able to work it out, that the sacrifices are what I have stated and the gain is a problematic increase of speed."

On the 30th of the same month Mr. Latimer and his colleagues met in New York and virtually threw over Standard Dot. It was a prompt and dramatic bow to the inevitable. Their decision was now to concentrate on securing improvements in the contractions of British Braille with a view to adopting that system as the universal type. No words could be too warm in praise of the conduct and temper of the American workers. They had laboured indefatigably in their experiments and researches, had produced a system which they knew by reference to statistical tables of results to be better than any existing one. They were foiled by what they must have regarded as British conservatism and yet they never hesitated. Their aim was the establishment of a universal type for the English speaking world and that objective had to be attained in spite of all disappointments and delays. They resolutely turned their backs on their own cherished bantling and asked for the co-operation of the old country in improving British Braille. It was a step of heroic self-denial and real statesmanship. Some difficulty was experienced on this side in setting up an authoritative Committee to carry on negotiations. The British and Foreign Blind Association, already known as the

National Institute for the Blind, again sought to assume an exclusive attitude but this was set aside and a genuinely representative Committee at last elected under the name of the National Uniform Type Committee. It met for the first time in July 1916 and appointed a sub-committee of experts which, under Mr. Stone's Chairmanship, considered a list of fifteen changes suggested by the American Committee. The findings of the sub-committee were reported to the full body in November and in March of the following year they were dispatched to America. The Trans-Atlantic post in 1917 was precarious and the packet never reached its destination. The report was first read by Mr. Latimer and his friends in the May issue of The Teacher of the Blind. It was an uncompromising document. "We deeply regret" it stated "that after long and most careful consideration we have been forced to the conclusion that the proposed changes would not be acceptable to users of British Braille and would tend rather to weaken the system than to strengthen it. ..... (they are) of sufficient importance to derange existing knowledge of Braille but are not of real value in securing its perfection." Again the Americans bowed to the inevitable. British Braille was not to be tampered with. Could it be adopted whole and unaltered? The general opinion in America was that there were too many contractions in Grade II for the average reader, and in all probability it would have been unwise to recommend immediate adoption of the system as it stood. What was done was to draft

an intermediate grade, to give it the expressive if inartistic title of Grade 1½ and to secure its adoption as the future type of the Continent. Thus uniformity, if not identity, was at last secured. There is now no obstacle to the use of American books by British readers and very little difficulty to American readers in Grade II Braille. It is a great achievement and in the record of its consummation the names of Randolph Latimer and W.M. Stone will always find an honoured place.

It has been noted that one characteristic and outstanding feature of the Braille system was the ease with which it could be written. This gave rise at an early date to the custom of transcribing by hand books for School and private use. Painstaking voluntary helpers all over the country took up this excellent form of social service and libraries were established in most of the large Institutions. In 1882 Miss Arnold, a blind lady of Hampstead, started the project of a lending library for adult readers and, with a friend called Miss Howden (afterwards Mrs. Dow) began a collection of books for this purpose. Their first headquarters were in Fairfax Road, not far from the School at Swiss Cottage. The venture proved a success and two other addresses in Hampstead were occupied before the Library moved in 1904 to Queen's Road, Bayswater. Two years later this small organisation had the good fortune to secure as its Librarian a woman of exceptional gifts and of magnetic personality. This was Miss Ethel Winifred Austin who in the short space of a

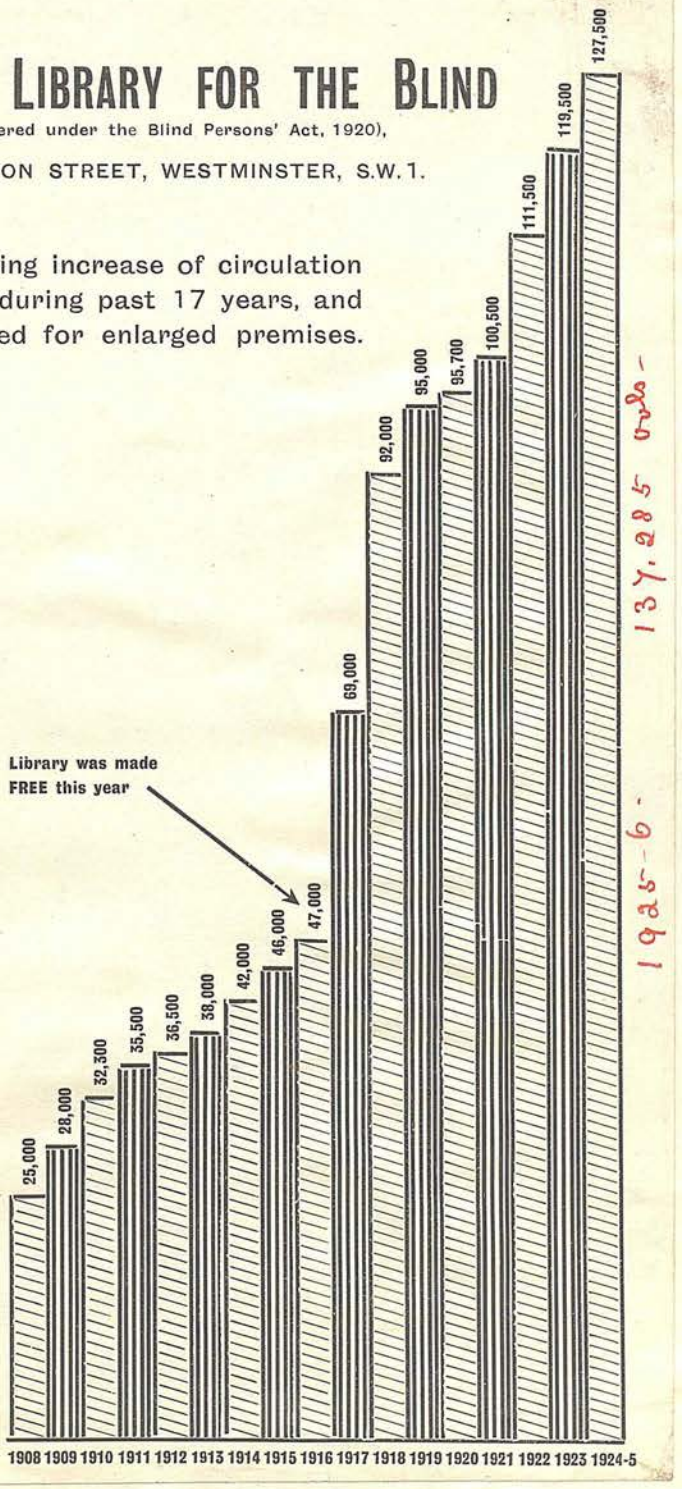
dozen years transformed the enterprise into a National Institution with an indispensable niche in the economy of the blind. Under Miss Austin's management the Library grew rapidly. It was soon too big for its premises at Queen's Road and the Committee were fortunate in securing admirable buildings in the old headquarters of the Architectural Association in Tufton Street, Westminster. This was in 1916 and the move was rendered practical by a substantial gift of £12,000 from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. In the same year Miss Austin attained one of her greatest ambitions in being able to declare the Library free to all blind readers. As it gradually assumed National proportions smaller collections of books were handed over to its keeping by their owners or custodians in order to prevent overlapping and to secure the greatest amount of usefulness from the material available. In 1917 the Catholic Truth Society transferred its 700 volumes and in the same year there came the notable accession of 10,000 volumes from the London Home Teaching Society. In the following year the books of the S.P.G. Library were also housed in Tufton Street. In that same year, 1918, a Northern Branch was opened in Manchester. The tide of the Library was strongly at the flood when on the 17th May, at the height of her powers and her influence, Miss Austin died. In the development of programmes and of Institutions it is extremely difficult to say how much is due to the work of any one individual. The weakest has his influence and the strongest is not indispensable. At the same time it is safe to say that the

NATIONAL LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND

(Registered under the Blind Persons' Act, 1920),

18 TUFTON STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1.

Diagram showing increase of circulation from London during past 17 years, and the urgent need for enlarged premises.



1925-6 - 137,285 vols -

National Lending Library of to-day is Miss Austin's creation. A growth so phenomenal is readily accepted when seen in retrospect but it must not be forgotten that a few sentences of statistics cover crowded years of brilliant effort. The conservatism of individuals and Institutions so inveterate in its obstinacy had to be overcome by a pertinacity greater than its own. Many difficult corners had to be negotiated and many reverses and delays now forgotten had to be endured. On the whole, however, Miss Austin's brief twelve years of work for the blind summed up a gay career. She herself was intensely alive and her buoyant personality surmounted difficulties with a smile. She fought her fights with a good humoured chuckle and her victories left behind a feeling of admiration but no sting. She made no enemies. On the other hand her friends were legion for she had the happy gift of winning staunch adherents and of enlisting enthusiastic advocates for her cause. Her sudden death was a calamity not only to the Library but to the blind world as a whole.

The Library was mainly built up of hand written books and a small army of voluntary writers in addition to paid blind copyists was employed in filling its shelves and in replacing worn-out volumes. In the early years of its existence there were few printed books to be had and it was only slowly that the stereotyping houses of London and Edinburgh met the need. In 1909 after allowing its fortunes to sink to a low ebb, the B. & F. B. A. began a vigorous attempt at increased output. In 1913 it called to its aid Mr. afterwards Sir, Arthur Pearson,

who had recently become blind. The new recruit brought with him abounding energy, great advertising knowledge, an effective influence with the newspaper world, and the personal appeal of his own loss. He embarked on a widespread appeal to the public for the cheapening of Braille books and in that enterprise brought into play, with undiminished verve, the driving force which had made him a captain in Fleet Street. He was soon able to shew to an astonished and rather slow going blind world what could be accomplished by hustle, flair, daring and a wide acquaintance with advertising media. He changed the name of the Association to the National Institute for the Blind, rebuilt its headquarters in Great Portland Street in a palatial style and stocked the new premises with an elaborate and up-to-date equipment for the printing of Braille. The output assisted still further by a substantial grant from the Carnegie Trust, was greatly increased but, to the surprise of many, the price per volume was also enhanced.

Although the National Library was deprived of Miss Austin's inspiration and guidance in 1918 its progress continued unchecked and another great extension of its premises has recently shewn itself to be imperative. During the year which ended in March, 1926, the number of volumes circulated reached the huge total of 185,000. As the present Librarian says, "This is the best and surest guarantee that the Library is filling a very real need in the lives of the blind."

The books read by the blind have not only grown in number.

They have changed in character. Frequent reference has been made to the religious nature of the early teaching of the blind. The Bible was the first book to be embossed in any new system and the majority of the other works had a pronounced pietistic flavour. James Gall's publications were all of this kind. Here is a page from one picked at random from a pile of his volumes. "You have a body and a soul. Your body will soon die and be laid in the dust. Your soul will live for ever. It will live for ever with God or with Satan. It will live for ever in Heaven or it will live for ever in Hell. It will live for ever in peace and joy and love or it will live for ever in fire and pain and woe." This bears the date 1839 and it was many years before the horizon widened. The change is one of mental attitude as well as one of type. The blind were in the position of wards who should only be allowed what was good for them. Now each is recognised as having the rights of a full grown citizen with as much claim to choose his own reading as his own bus route or his own boots. It is the ancient love of censorship which dies hard in well meaning and masterful minds. The blind have been emancipated from this control and the National Library is now a varied collection shewing not only wise discrimination but a wide catholicity of choice. The amount of tactual reading has increased because of the growth of the Library, but the Library itself has in turn been stimulated to its expansion by the rapid increase in the numbers of its potential readers. The capacity to read has been partly the result of the Schools but also it

is to a large extent the result of the patient labours of the Home Teacher.

Another point deserves attention. It is now plain, although in the past controversy has waged on the subject, that both handwritten and stereotyped books have their place in blind economy. Printing cannot be undertaken without the expense of metal plates and, unless there is a reasonably large demand for copies of the work, the cost of printing is unjustified. Books which are not likely to be required for general use are therefore most suitably provided by handwritten copies. Schoolbooks and standard works which many Institutions as well as individuals will wish to possess should be printed, but students' books and other works of limited appeal may well continue to be written. In this connection some figures may be of interest. During the year which ended in March 1926 there were added to the National Library's stock of Braille books 3,445 manuscript Braille and 3,098 stereotyped volumes. This it may be surmised, if the supply is in relation to the demand, that the general reader depends rather more on handwritten books than he does on those which come from the press.

The great amount of literature which is now in Braille makes it unlikely that the question of further revision will be kindly received when next it is raised. The American workers have shewn that, with all the advantages of experience, scientific method and endless patience, the most carefully constructed system is little better than Grade II Braille in

any of its essential qualities and this fact is, in itself, likely to warn off succeeding reformers. If a new system ever takes first place with the blind it will not be a modification of Braille but the fruit of some entirely new idea.

A word may here be added with regard to music notation. Appreciating the great value of a system whereby music could be read by the fingers the inventors of most of the early types worked out adaptations of their letters to music. These elaborations, however, are of only antiquarian interest as Braille has reached the proud position of being the one and only system now in use.

It will be remembered that Louis Braille was himself a musician and so it is not surprising that his alphabet was no sooner invented than it was made to serve the purposes of his art. The letters D to J in the first line stand for the notes C to B in quavers; the letters of the second line stand for the same notes in minims, those of the third line in crotchets and the fourth line in semibreves or semiquavers. The remaining signs are utilised for the other necessary musical symbols.

The system thus worked out was adopted officially by the Paris Institution in 1852 and was adopted by Dr. Armitage as the one which should be popularised in Britain. In 1871 The British and Foreign Blind Association published a booklet explaining the notation and it is interesting to note that this is the first Key to Braille Music in any language. The Cologne Conferences of 1888 dealt fully with the subject and

an attempt was made to secure uniformity of method in the leading European countries. This led to a new edition of the Key which incorporated the agreed changes and additions. A third edition of this little volume was brought out in 1896 and a fourth in 1900. It was felt by many that the Key was itself in need of simplification and expansion and so in 1901 Mr. Edward Watson an indefatigable worker in this field brought out a Tutor or manual of carefully graded lessons. An ink-print copy was published by Messrs. Novello & Co., in the following year. This, to use Mr. Watson's own words, "was more particularly intended for the use of seeing teachers of blind music students or for those who might wish to assist in the musical education of the blind in any way."

Valuable papers on the education and employment of the blind in music were read at the Manchester and the Exeter Conferences both of them followed by useful discussions. It was generally felt that there was a dearth of music in Braille and the attention of the printing houses and of the National Library was forcibly called to this defect. It was also agreed that improvements in the system itself should be undertaken. A Notation Committee was established (1911) and set itself the task of revising the system. Mr. H.C. Warrilow acted as its chairman and with tact, knowledge and patience he guided his Committee through the ten long years of its labours. The results saw the light in the Key published by the National Institute in 1922 in Braille and in an ink-print replica brought out by Messrs. Novello in 1925. The foundations of

the system were left undisturbed. It was a revision, not a revolution, and yet by one change alone the Committee made an enormous advance in the ease and accuracy with which piano or organ music could be learned by a blind student. This was the introduction of what is commonly called the "bar by bar" method. Formerly eight bars or more of the treble clef were written and then an equal number of the bass. In the case of organ music this was followed by the pedal. To a seeing musician who grasps the full score at a glance, the formidable difficulty of combining the three component sections from different parts of the page is obvious. The new method is explained by its name. It enables the student to get each complete bar under his fingers with a minimum of trouble. The Committee also strove successfully to make the notation capable of representing every symbol used in printed music. Like Grade II Braille, the Music Notation of 1922 has reached finality. To a greater extent than in the case of Grade II it can ~~be~~ safely claim to have gone as far as is humanly possible in the ingenious adaptation of means to ends.

The prayer of the musicians in 1908 and 1911 for more music has also been largely answered. The printing houses have increased their output enormously and the National Library has built up a great store for the use of all blind music lovers.

CHAPTER VIII

STATE AID FOR THE ADULT

Chapter VIII

About the year 1893 an association of blind workers, mainly London Workshop employees, was formed under the name of The National League of the Blind. This proved a vigorous and militant body and soon made its voice heard in a campaign for State Aid. Its propaganda was bound up with much hostile criticism of the Institutions. The money which had been given and bequeathed by the charitable public for the benefit of the blind was , it contended, being spent to an undue extent on seeing officials and management expenses. Its official organ was a monthly sheet called The Blind Advocate which began life in Manchester in 1898. The files of this rather dull publication have not improved with keeping although one can admire the unflagging energy with which it hurled its adverse criticisms at the Institutions and reiterated its demand that the blind should have direct assistance from the State. It contended, and little could be urged against its contention that the problem should be scientifically handled as a whole and not left to the piece meal action and insufficient resources of the voluntary agencies. In spite of a proneness to the argumentum ad verecundiam and in spite of a partisan lack of proportion the League was working in the right direction and the 1920 Act put upon the Statute Book the principle of its main contention.

The destructive part of the League's programme naturally antagonised the Institutions and made them ignore the value of its constructive proposals. Although they developed some power of co-operation later they had, for many years, little faculty

for collective action. Completely inarticulate, they endured the verbal brickbats of the League as best they could and stubbornly set their faces against the notion of any assistance from the State in respect of the adult blind. As had been the case fifty years earlier the problem of the better and more general employment of the blind was forced on the attention of the Institutions from without as well as from within. The pace of progress was quickened and the development of the Institutions themselves furthered by men who would have preferred to see the voluntary system completely swept away.

In 1905 a Conference of workers for the Blind was held in Edinburgh and as the problem of more work and better wages was by that time in everyone's mind a whole day was allocated to its discussion. As might have been expected divergent views were expressed and in the end a Committee was appointed to work out a solution. Its first plan was to secure Government contracts, and orders for baskets and brushes were given to several of the larger workshops by the Post Office and the War Office. Unfortunately the work could not be executed except at a loss so that the Institutions were no better off than before. Because of the failure of this line of approach and in self-defence against the confiscatory measures which were being canvassed by the League in the form of a Parliamentary Bill the Committee swung round completely in favour of State assistance. At last the situation was frankly faced. The number of blind men and women employed in workshops was only 2,300. About 200 young

persons were completing their technical training annually and for these practically no provision was being made. At the same time the wages paid were inadequate and owing to lack of funds in most of the Institutions very little could be added by way of augmentation to the sums actually earned. As far back as the days of the 1885 Commission the blind workers had stood united in favour of a State subsidy of wages in one form or another but their petitions had gone unheeded. Now the League's Bill had brought the matter again to the front and along with the demand for municipal workshops it stipulated for an adequate wage. The Committee were thus driven to produce a measure of their own.

As the Labour Party were backing the League's Bill the Committee met the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress in December, 1910, and argued that in any proposed Legislation the Institutions should not be completely ignored. The two competing Bills were compared and shortly afterwards the League's Bill was amended by the inclusion of two clauses from that drafted by the Committee.

The Bill thus altered was laid before a Meeting of representatives of the Institutions in March, 1911, but did not find favour in their eyes. Resolutions were passed calling for the provision of technical training to be made compulsory on Education Authorities and approving the principle of subventions to workshops both from rates and taxes. An influential National Committee was appointed which, with the help of a Parliamentary Draftsman prepared a new Bill embodying these principles. This

draft was accepted by a second meeting of Institution representatives and was actually read a first time in Parliament in October, 1912. Further negotiations then took place with the National League who after securing the addition of one or two clauses dealing with grants to individual blind persons dropped their own Bill and enlisted the support of the Labour Party for the Institutions' measure. This, usually referred to as the No. 2 Bill, thus went forward with the unanimous support of the blind world. A first reading was secured in the month of May, 1914. The forward step, however, did not come by means of any of the proposed enactments. Although agreement had been reached, the League kept the matter alive by questions from the Labour benches in the House of Commons. In February of the same year Mr. Philip Snowden asked the Prime Minister if, in view of the number of the blind who were in workhouses or were begging on the streets, he did not think there should be an authoritative enquiry. Mr. Asquith replied that he would consider the question. This was non-committal but it was apparent that some movement was going on behind the scenes and that the Government were contemplating action.

Three weeks later, on the 11th March, 1914, Mr. G.J. Wardle, the member for Stockport, was given an unexpected opportunity to bring forward private business in the House and initiated a most useful debate on the condition of the blind. Mr. Wardle proposed a motion in the following terms, "That, in the opinion of this House, the present system of voluntary

effort in aid of the Blind people of this Country does not adequately meet their necessities, and that the State should make provision whereby capable Blind people might be made industrially self-supporting, and the incapable and infirm maintained in a proper and humane manner." Sir Herbert Lewis, Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, in a sympathetic reply said that the Government would raise no objection to the motion being adopted by the House but pointed out that more precise information was necessary and intimated that an inter-departmental Committee would shortly be set up for that purpose.

This was done on the 7th May with the following reference "to consider the present condition of the blind in the United Kingdom and the means available for (a) their industrial or professional training and (b) their assistance and to make recommendations."

For nearly two years the Committee examined witnesses, putting to them close on 13,000 questions and carefully recording their replies. These with supplementary notes and memoranda and with the Committee's Report and Recommendations were published in August, 1917, and created the greatest interest in the world of the blind.

Men's minds had been so full of the comparative merits of competing Bills and so united in agreement on the principles elaborated in their latest effort that some surprise was occasioned by the omission from the Report of any suggestion of

an immediate recourse to Parliament. Its most important recommendation was in fact a step which could be taken by administrative action. The Committee had been impressed with the need for the more active intervention of the State to secure central control of the existing agencies and, therefore, suggested that a special department or central authority should be set up in the Ministry of Health, whenever such a Ministry should be created, and in the meantime in the Local Government Board, for the general care and supervision of the blind. This Central Authority was to have at its disposal funds provided by the Exchequer. It was to be responsible to Parliament for its actions and to be guided as to policy by an Advisory Committee. The Central Authority was set up in 1918 and quickly got to grips with its problem.

A Principal Clerk was put in charge of the Department and it must be gratefully acknowledged that it was a stroke of good fortune to the Blind world that Mr. E.D. Macgregor was selected for this work. In the developments that followed the inception of central control Mr. Macgregor for nine years played a part of primary importance. He quickly grasped the intricacies of the problems with which the Ministry had for the first time to deal and by his wise and statesmanlike recommendations he helped to bring about a veritable transformation. Impartial in his views, shrewd and fearless in his opinions he rendered invaluable service to the blind men and women of the nation.

On the 7th August, 1919, a circular was issued, over the signature of Sir Robert Morant, the First Secretary of the Ministry of Health, conveying the welcome news that as from the 1st July certain services for the benefit of the Blind would for the first time be eligible for grants from the Exchequer. Regulations governing the distribution of the grant were attached to this circular and still form the basis of the Ministry's payments.

Grants are payable to approved agencies in respect of the following services and at the following rates:-

I.	Workshops	£20 per worker
2.	Home Workers' Schemes	£20 " "
3.	Homes and Hostels	£13 and £5 respectively per inmate.
4.	Home Teaching	£78 per Teacher
5.	Book Production	2/6 per volume and smaller amounts for music and magazines.
6.	Counties Associations	£20 per 100 registered
7.	Miscellaneous.	

In connection with Home Workers the grant of £20 is only paid when the worker, if a man, is earning 16/- or more a week and if a woman 8/- or more. If less than these figures the grant is proportionately reduced. The Ministry are also prepared to contribute towards the provision of a Home Worker's initial equipment to the extent of 50 per cent.

As shewing the manner in which the central control of the Ministry has increased the volume of work done it is

interesting to compare the figures of the second completed year after the inception of the Scheme with those for the latest year for which statistics are obtainable.

Services	1921-2	1925-6
	£	£
Counties Associations	6,844	7,866
Workshops	31,476	41,130
Home Workers	6,117	17,440
Homes	6,673	7,572
Hostels	739	924
Home-Teaching	12,978	20,630
Tools and equipment	147	725
Book Production	4,912	5,036
Capital Expenditure	-	2,651
Miscellaneous	-	20
Total	£69,886	£103,994

From the earliest times there had been a danger of general attention being focussed on Institutional work for the blind. The controversy about State Aid centred round the workshops and in many addresses and articles increased workshop accommodation was spoken of as if it contained a complete

solution of all the problems of the blind. A due sense of proportion was being lost and the Central Authority during the first years of its rule did much to create a more balanced estimate of the situation. More than half the blind of the Country are and are likely to remain unemployable. A large proportion of these are persons of advanced years. Now unemployables do not require workshops but they do, for the most part, need visitation and assistance and it was held that the appropriate bodies to render this aid were the County Associations in England and the Out-Door Missions in Scotland. The origin of these agencies calls for more detailed notice. The Scottish Missions to the Out-Door Blind had a beginning in Edinburgh in 1857 and extended until the whole Country was covered by ten Societies, since reduced to nine, and the individual blind visited by a staff of twenty-four Home Teachers. Their work was looked upon as missionary effort and the religious instruction and consolation of their charges were their first cares. Next came the teaching of an embossed system of reading that the blind might decipher the Scriptures for themselves. Temporal care was not overlooked and a large number of capable blind men were set up as small traders. In 1905 it was reported that 313 were thus employed. Machinery to cope with the larger problem of the English outdoor blind was later in being effectively organised, although the pioneer of outdoor Societies was the Indigent Blind Visiting Society of London which had been founded as far back as 1832. Like the Scottish Societies its work was largely missionary effort,

coupled with the relief of distress and the teaching of embossed reading. In 1852 Miss Graham founded the London Home Teaching Society. This gradually widened its area of operations till it covered the Home Counties. Dr. Moon, as has already been seen, was also instrumental in starting similar societies in different parts of the Country. In 1906 the first Association of Agencies for the Blind was formed to cover the six Northern Counties. This was an association of all the bodies working for the blind in the area. It was followed in succeeding years by six other Association, viz., those for the Metropolitan and Adjacent Counties -

The Midland Counties

The North Western Counties

The Counties of South Wales and Monmouth

The Western Counties

The Eastern Counties

The co-operative action thus outlined was carried one stage further by the formation of a national federation called the Union of Associations. This consists of representatives from the seven Associations and is a useful instrument for the furtherance of unity of action and provides a common ground for the discussion of difficulties. In the opposite direction devolution took place to assist the development and control of local affairs and County Associations were formed. The main duties which each Association places before itself are, first, to compile and maintain a register of its own blind, second, to promote such co-operation among existing agencies as may

lead to an extension of work on behalf of the blind, third, to form societies in districts where none exist and, fourth, to visit the blind in their own homes. On the formation of the Central Department, the Ministry itself undertook the compilation of a register of blind persons and a great deal of valuable spade work was done. In 1921, however, it was decided to intrust this task to the County Associations. The provision of Home Teaching also became part of the work of the Associations through the influence of the Ministry. It believed in the intimate co-ordination between registration case-work and welfare visiting and also in the local control of all this section of the work. It, therefore, influenced the break up of the unwieldy London Home Teaching Society and the acceptance of its work by the new agencies in the Metropolitan area. The growth of the Home Teaching Service under the guidance of the Central Department was rapid. The one hundred teachers of 1919 had increased to 343 by 1926 while the qualifications and standard of efficiency had also improved. In 1923 the Ministry asked the College of Teachers of the Blind to institute a Home Teachers' Examination and issued a circular to the effect that all persons appointed to such posts after the 1st April, 1924, would be required to obtain the Certificate of the College within two years of their engagement. The service has not only expanded, it has changed in character. The chief functions of the old-time Home Teacher were, as has already been noted, the giving of

religious consolation and the teaching of Moon. His successor of to-day is more the social worker than the missionary, more the welfare visitor than the teacher. This change is fundamental but it is sometimes forgotten or ignored by those who maintain that blindness is no bar to the efficient carrying out of such work.

Another direction in which the Ministry assisted the scattered blind was by the encouragement of Home Workers' Schemes. It was seen in an earlier chapter that Dr. Armitage tried hard to induce the British Institutions to adopt a system of after care whereby former pupils might continue to have the benefit of specialised supervision when at work in their own homes. He failed in his endeavour and long after his day opinion hardened still more against the establishment of home industries. Orthodox opinion claimed that the workshop was the one and only solution of the employment problem. The Ministry pointed out that while workshops might in theory be the most efficient method of dealing with the industrially trained blind, in practice the existing shops were inadequate to the situation. Further, it was safe to premise that there would always remain a number of blind men and women for whom workshop employment was not practicable and that for such a scheme of assistance in their own homes was therefore indispensable. The promise of Treasury Grants was a powerful aid to the Ministry's pleading and some of the larger Institutions such as those in Birmingham, London and Nottingham

prepared schemes and embarked on the work. At the end of the year 1925-26 there were already half as many men and women working in their own homes under the supervision of one or other recognised scheme as there were employed in Workshops.

A work of such magnitude cannot be dismissed without some further explanation. Home Workers according to the 1919 Regulations meant "adult blind persons who for sufficient reasons are employed elsewhere than in a workshop in occupations usually practised in workshops and are attached, for purposes of care, assistance and supervision to an approved agency." The definition is not a happy one but it has been interpreted with a certain amount of elasticity and persons engaged in the following occupations have been regarded by the Ministry as eligible for inclusion under a scheme, Basketmaking, Brush-making, Matmaking, Bootrepairing, Pianoforte Tuning, Music Teaching, Tea-agencies, Carpentering, Hand and Machine Knitting, Straw and String Bag Making, Rug and Net Making.

The Scheme provides raw material at something like cost price to those who require it, keeps the work up to standard level and assists in the marketing of the finished goods. In occupations like Tuning and Music Teaching the Scheme can assist by local advertisements, visiting cards, etc., as well as by the more direct provision of orders.

The Ministry require to be furnished with particulars of each worker before sanctioning his or her inclusion on the Register of the Scheme. It has also to be supplied with

details of weekly earnings and on these figures it calculates its grant.

It has been pointed out that the care of the blind who are outside the walls of Institutions has been fostered and stimulated by the Ministry. Their interest is shewn in concrete fashion by the sanctioning of grants to agencies who render assistance to the outdoor blind to the amount of nearly £47,000 for the year ended 31st March, 1926. On the other hand the service which earns the largest grant is that of workshop employment.

The Central Department had only been two years in existence when it called into partnership by legislative provision the Local Authorities of the Country. Thus the many workers who had striven so earnestly to settle responsibility for the care of the blind on the shoulders of the Municipal and County Councils saw at last the fruition of their labours. The strenuous advocacy of competing Bills, the negotiations and canvassings of four years were vindicated and the gap in the 1917 Report made good by one far-reaching Clause. "It shall be the duty of the council of every county and county borough, whether in combination with any other council or councils or otherwise, to make arrangements to the satisfaction of the Minister of Health for promoting the welfare of blind persons ordinarily resident within their area, and such council may for this purpose provide and maintain or contribute towards the provision and maintenance of workshops, hostels, homes,

or other places for the reception of blind persons whether within or without their area and, with the approval of the Minister of Health, do such other things as may appear to them desirable for the purpose aforesaid. The Council shall, within twelve months after the passing of this Act, prepare and submit to the Minister of Health a scheme for the exercise of their powers under this section."

This is the second section of the Blind Persons' Act which was passed as a Government measure in August, 1920, and it is characteristic that the preceding section should deal with the scattered and individual blind. It provides for the granting of pensions to blind persons on attaining the age of 50 at the same rates and on the same conditions as Old Age Pensions. In 1925 more than 16,000 blind men and women in Great Britain and Northern Ireland between the ages of 50 and 70 were in receipt of this subsidy at a cost to the Nation of £413,000.

The third section of the Act applies the provisions of the War Charities Act 1916, with certain modifications, to all agencies making public appeals for subscriptions on behalf of the blind. This means that such an agency must be registered with the County or County Borough Council in whose area its office is situated and must submit its annual audited accounts to the same body. The Authority has the right to refuse recognition to an agency if it is satisfied that the work which the agency proposes to do is already being efficiently

accomplished by an existing organisation.

As this Act is a prominent landmark in the history of work for the blind it may be desirable to give a few details of its passage through Parliament. The Bill was presented to the House of Commons by Dr. Addison, the Minister of Health, on the 26th April, 1920, and was read a second time on the 14th May. The Minister was congratulated by members of all parties on the benevolent intentions of his Bill but the general feeling seemed to be that its provisions might have gone further without straining the cordial support of the country.

As the Pensions Clause (No. 1) required the passing of a money Resolution a debate took place in Committee of the whole House on 25th June on this point. Again a striking unanimity was shewn in favour of more generous treatment for the blind. No one was satisfied and grim comparisons were made between the humble figure of £220,000, the estimated cost of the pensions and the millions spent on Mesopotamia and in reclothing the Guards in scarlet. The alternative was not so much between approval and disapproval as between vetoing the Resolution at the risk of losing the Bill and accepting it as a first instalment on the ground that the proverbial half loaf was better than no bread. Mr. Baldwin, then Financial Secretary to the Treasury, told the House that no more money would be forthcoming and with the aid of the Government Whips the Resolution was passed by a large majority. On the 21st July

the Bill was put through its Committee stage. The Government were not altogether unmindful of the tone of the earlier discussions and the most important amendment stood in Dr. Addison's own name. This was to make Clause 2 mandatory instead of permissive. The Clause as finally passed has already been cited. It may be of interest to quote it as it first appeared in Committee. "It shall be lawful for the council of any county or county borough to provide and maintain or to contribute towards the provision and maintenance of workshops, hostels, homes, or other places for the reception of blind persons within or without their area, and, with the approval of the Minister of Health, to make such further arrangements for promoting the welfare of blind persons as they may think fit, and two or more such councils may combine for all or any of the above purposes."

The tone of the discussion in Standing Committee was similar to that of the Chamber itself and all the amendments proposed were aimed at strengthening the provisions of the Bill. Mr. Stephen Walsh summed up the attitude of the speakers in the various debates in his dictum "Honourable as the attempt is, it is not as generous or courageous as the circumstances require." It must be remembered however that, as is not uncommon, the enthusiasts for a root and branch policy were more vocal than their numerical strength warranted and the silent majority looked on the Bill as a substantial and praiseworthy advance in social legislation. The third reading was taken on the 3rd August and the Bill went to the Lords

on the following day. In the Upper Chamber the opportunity was taken of amending the draftsmanship in some particulars and of extending to twelve months the time given to Local Authorities for the preparation of schemes. The Bill was read a third time in the Lords on the 11th August and on the 16th of the same month it received the Royal Assent.

Clause two has made a fundamental change in the administration of assistance to the blind. The duty of caring for them is laid on local authorities while the Ministry insists upon a certain degree of uniformity of action. It is a new responsibility and its advent has coincided with a period of economy and financial stringency. The Councils are therefore cautious in accepting their obligations and the situation is still far from having reached a point of equilibrium between the legitimate demands of the blind and the public provision to meet them. Already however much has been done and in the year which closed on the 31st March, 1926, the sum of £127,000 had been expended by the Councils of Counties and County Boroughs in various plans for the betterment of this handicapped section of the community.

CHAPTER IX

FINANCE AND THE FUTURE

Chapter IX

Elaborate statistics relating to the blind may be found in the Reports of the English and the Scottish Advisory Committees and so need not be introduced here. One or two figures, however, may be given to facilitate, in closing, a bird's-eye view of the situation. Roughly speaking the blind form a nine hundredth part of the nation. In April, 1925, the number known to the registering authorities in Great Britain was 48,472, in England and Wales 42,140 and in Scotland 6,332.

Their distribution according to age was as follows:-

	England and Wales	Scotland	Total
0 years to 5	257	23	280
5 years " 16	2,720	326	3,046
16 " " 21	1,682	258	1,940
21 " " 50	12,200	1,824	14,024
Over 50	24,913	3,889	28,802
Age unknown	368	12	380
	42,140	6,332	48,472

The number of blind males exceeds that of blind females by 1077. This means that out of every hundred blind, 51 are males and 49 females. 6,300 were found to be suffering from some additional disability such as mental deficiency or deafness.

Although the preceding pages prove beyond all cavil that a great improvement has been brought about in the condition of the blind, much yet remains to be done. This is shewn by the fact that the number of those actively engaged in some definite occupation is less than half the number between the ages of 20 and 50 years. An analysis of the numbers employed in the

principal occupations may be of interest.

	England and Wales	Scotland
Basket Makers	1,867	111
Musicians and Piano Tuners	810	110
Knitters	946	44
Brush Makers	419	42
Mat Makers	599	37

Statistics of employment are however changing so rapidly that they are quickly out of date and their main interest is that of being milestones on the road of achievement. The pace is quickening and the day is not far distant when to each blind person will come surely and swiftly that particular assistance of which he stands in need. In pressing forward to that consummation each of the three great instruments, the Central Department, the Local Authority and the Voluntary Agency has its part to play.

The question is often asked "Is blindness on the increase?" and it is comforting to be able to reply in the negative. At the same time it should be noted that registration, and the improved case work of the Counties' Associations are bringing larger numbers to the attention of the appropriate agency. More care is taken by local authorities in the prevention and treatment of infantile ophthalmia and better procautions against accident are being insisted upon in textile, metal and other factories. An additional power is given by the Public Health Act, 1925, to local authorities in England and Wales "to make with the consent of the Minister of Health such arrangements as they may think desirable for assisting in the prevention of blindness, and in particular for the treatment of persons

ordinarily resident within their areas suffering from any disease of or injury to the eyes."

That the number of the aged blind shews a distinct absolute increase is explained by the greater longevity of the general population in recent years. On the other hand, the decrease of blindness at the beginning of life is substantial. In Bradford, a town of 300,000 inhabitants, an average of only one baby a year is allowed to join the blind population within the first year of life and this is eloquent testimony to what can and ought to be achieved over the whole country.

More than half the blind of the nation are over 50 years of age when training is, for the most part, impracticable and when the most natural form of assistance is a monetary grant. Reference has already been made to the large sum spent by the State in this way and it may be useful to look for a moment at those charities which help the blind along similar lines. There are in all about 75 Pension Societies in the country of which 24 have their offices in London. The amount of money distributed annually is nearly £54,000, and the number of recipients is about 6,200. The oldest pension funds of any note are probably those administered by the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers in the City of London which now benefits in this way some 1,250 persons. Among its funds for this purpose are sums left as far back as 1718. The largest single bequest was that made by Charles Day, of the Boot Blacking firm of Day & Martin, in 1834, by which he set aside £100,000 to be

distributed in annuities to the necessitous blind.

In 1774 the Rev. William Hetherington made a gift to Christ's Hospital, of which he was a Governor, of a sum sufficient to subsidise fifty persons at the rate of £10 a year. His generous action was imitated by subsequent Governors and now the Hospital has 800 pensioners on its list.

Gardner's Trust, to which allusion has already been made, distributes each year just under £3,000 to 225 annuitants, while The Royal Blind Pension Society has 1,300 beneficiaries on its books at figures varying from £6 to £15 a year.

These notes on pensions lead to a question of more controversial nature, that of the advisability or otherwise of giving pecuniary assistance to the adult blind as a direct compensation for their disability. In a Reservation to the Departmental Report of 1917 three members felt it would be well for "the State to recognise the handicap under which the blind persons suffer and to make a suitable allowance to all blind persons above the age of 21 who are not unworthy of assistance and who have no sufficient private means of support .....any refusal to undertake training or suitable employment might involve the forfeiture of the pension. Street begging, crime, drunkenness would also lead to its forfeiture."

The idea was revived some six years later by Mr. Stone of Edinburgh and under his advocacy was introduced into the Report of the Scottish Advisory Committee for 1924. The suggestion was that a grant of not less than £1 per week be made to each blind person, employable or unemployable, over the age

of sixteen. If private means exceeded £105 a year the grant was to be proportionately reduced, disappearing when private means reached £200.

"We are of opinion" says the Report, "that the adoption of the principle of a compensation allowance to blind persons over school age as recommended by us would

(1) greatly simplify the question of maintenance during technical training;

(2) encourage many blind people to embark on private trading with good prospects of success;

(3) enable more suitable blind men and women to enter professional callings;

(4) lead to workshop employment being reserved for really capable workers;

(5) save persons who become blind in middle life having to apply for poor law relief;

(6) solve the problem of the necessitous and unemployable blind, and make the provision of Homes for the aged and infirm more possible."

If the Committee are right in thinking that the grant would restrict workshop employment they would seem to be arguing against their own proposal for, although the removal of the semi-competent from the shops would be a relief to the management, it would not be in the best interests of the blind. It is better that the blind should contribute to their own livelihood even when the proportion is small. That the compensation allowance, if it were to come into operation, would have large reactions on the workshop situation is clear. In no direction would this be more noticeable than in the abolition, which would almost certainly follow, of the payments

known as augmentation of wages. This phrase, so constant a refrain in all discussions on the industrial side of blind affairs is doubtless less familiar to the lay reader and, in its special reference, may well call for a few words of explanation. The wages in most of the trades followed by the blind are paid in accordance with piece-work rates and not at so much an hour like carpenters or labourers. This custom of the trade is followed in the case of blind workers, but owing to their handicap the average amount earned is much lower than the average of a seeing operative. This is the only payment to which the blind worker is entitled as an economic return for his labour but, as it is insufficient, a grant is made to supplement his earnings. Such a supplement or augmentation has no place in the trading account of the Workshop. It is not wages but has a strong similarity to the "compensation allowance" of the Reservation and Report. The amount of augmentation varies in different workshops. The Ministry of Health has given its blessing to a sliding scale in which the augmentation falls as wages rise. The present system of piece-work rates plus augmentation is disliked by many of the workers who argue that the blind should be paid "at a rate of remuneration not less than the average standard rate received by an unskilled labourer in the district" irrespective of the amount of work done. The whole question is one of much complexity and more detailed consideration would be out of place in a brief outline of this nature.

It is clear from the above, however, that the employed

blind may be said to be already in receipt of a compensation allowance, while Local Authorities are coming to the aid of the unemployable and are gradually accepting the principle that a subsistence level of some sort should be maintained at their expense. In some areas the income of every blind person living alone is made up to 20/- a week. In other districts the income is augmented to 25/- or more. These variations are inevitable under a system of Government in which nearly two hundred Authorities determine their individual policies. The English Advisory Committee in their 1926 Report summarise the situation thus:- "A considerable number of Local Authorities have now made definite arrangements for the financial assistance of unemployable blind persons living in their own homes and it is encouraging to note the progress that has been made . . . . . There are however still many areas in which no attempt is being made to meet the financial requirements of this class in a systematic way and looking at the matter in its broad national aspect we cannot yet say that we are satisfied with the provision made for this class." The first steps have been taken, however, and these are sufficient to shew the direction of future advance. Supplement by Local Authorities after full inquisition into earnings is a more likely solution than an unvarying allowance from the State, unless the advocates of the latter scheme can win over a public opinion which is still apathetic.

The payment of augmentation is assisted by the capitation grant of the Ministry, but this item of expenditure is a heavy

drain on the charitable funds of those Institutions which provide workshop employment and strenuous efforts have to be made to secure sufficient support from the public. Their difficulties in this direction indeed bulk so prominently in the affairs of the blind world to-day that although the problem bristles with controversial aspects, a recital of some of the outstanding facts must be attempted.

Reference has been made in an earlier chapter to the advent in 1913 of Mr. (afterwards Sir Arthur) Pearson to the world of the Blind and to the impetus which he gave to the resources of the National Institute. Very soon the War turned his main energies to the care of the soldiers and sailors who lost their sight in battle and to the raising of funds for that purpose, but the Institute was closely connected with that project and shared in the golden harvest which was reaped from the irresistible appeal of the blinded warrior. A large publicity organisation was rapidly built up and in a short time the whole country was covered. Its financial success was unprecedented and the Institute received from the public an extraordinarily generous response apart altogether from the money which flowed into the coffers of the Soldiers' Hostel at St.Dunstan's. This created a situation probably unknown till then in any field of philanthropic effort in that resources greatly outstripped needs. The Institute therefore made substantial grants to local Institutions and cast about for new items to add to its programme of work. Worcester College was generously subsidised and became a branch of the Institute .

A Home for blind babies was opened at Chorley Wood in Hertfordshire and a College for Blind Girls was later started in the same district.

This novel incongruity between means and necessities, coupled with the fact that the money was being raised in districts where previously local Institutions had known little competition gave rise to feelings of widespread dissatisfaction and resentment. In April 1920 these feelings had become so general and so insistent that a conference of representatives of Institutions and Societies was called together in Clothworkers' Hall "to consider as to the desirability of centralisation and unification of all collections made on behalf of the blind." Sir Arthur Pearson was spokesman for the Institute and made it plain that while it was willing to act as fairy godmother to any agency it would brook neither control nor interference. Shortly after the meeting a Committee was formed to consider the question further, but for some time little progress was made. In December 1921 Sir Arthur Pearson's vivid career came to its abrupt close and the whole situation was materially altered. A Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. P.M. Evans of the Clothworkers' Company brought out a scheme which after many changes was made acceptable to most of the organisations for the blind in the country. It was an ambitious and far reaching plan, broadly conceived and carefully worked out in detail. It was inevitably somewhat elaborate because the situation with which

it undertook to deal was complicated, but the elaboration was not more than that situation required.

It contemplated the setting up of a central representative Council of forty-five members with wide powers. This Council was to scrutinise the budgets for National Services and to act generally as a court of appeal. The country was to be divided into eight areas and in each a representative Committee was to have full control of the raising and allocating of voluntary funds with the proviso that a first charge was to be a reservation for national services. "National" meant generalised services like the printing of books or the maintenance of a National Library. The amount of the reservation was to be fixed by the Central Council on the basis of the comparative population of each area. As has been said, most of the voluntary agencies concurred in the scheme, but defeat lay in wait. The Institute had been friendly and its representatives had taken part in most of the discussions, but in the end it broke away and refused to have anything to do with it. No further attempt at a solution was made till 1926 when a much less ambitious scheme was drafted by the Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Health and accepted by the Institute. By this plan the Council of the Institute was increased by seventeen representative members and the Council thus enlarged is to overhaul its Articles of Association with a view to increasing still further the number of such members. The kernel of the scheme lies in the provisions of paragraphs

7 and 8 which may be given in full.

"(7) That the Council of the Institute, expanded in the manner referred to above, should at once proceed to open negotiations with local Voluntary Agencies for the Blind with a view to the framing of collecting agreements. Wherever possible the local Voluntary Agency should be encouraged to take over and assume full responsibility for the whole of the collecting machinery in the area, and to remit to the National Institute an agreed percentage of the net local collections for its national services. Where it is not practicable for the local Agency to take over all collecting machinery the Institute should endeavour to make agreements whereby in co-operation with the local Agency they will themselves undertake responsibility for the collection of monies and allocate the net proceeds in such proportions as may be jointly agreed upon for local and national services respectively.

(8) That a Board of Arbitration should be established by the Minister of Health, acting on the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind, to settle any disputes that may arise in the matter of collections as between Agencies conducting local and national services and that all Agencies making agreements for collecting purposes should accept the decision of the Arbitrators as final."

It is too early to weigh the effect of these proposals but it is clear that, if generally carried out, they will do much to redress the present lack of balance and to remove one persistent cause of discontent and jealousy.

It is none too soon for these uncomfortable feelings have for the past decade rendered genuine harmony impossible. They have been the source of acrimony where good fellowship should have prevailed and lessened the disinterested pleasure which all true workers feel when absorbed in a laborious but unselfish task.

It used to be said by opponents of State Aid that the receiving of Government Grants would dry up the wells of charity and that voluntary funds would consequently dwindle. It is therefore interesting to note that at the present time more money is being raised for work on behalf of the blind than ever before. It is, however, probably fallacious to see any casual connection between this increase and Treasury subventions. Money raising is, to an increasing extent, being recognised as a business for specialists. The more efficient the publicity organisation the greater will be the sums raised. The War has made far-reaching changes in the distributinn of surplus wealth. The old regular subscriber to good causes was the well-to-do rentier who considered it a duty to his conscience and the community to spend a proportion of his income in this way. The rise in the cost of living, the fall in stocks and the additional burden of a heavy income tax have made a continuance of his giving impossible. The men who now have the money have not inherited the traditions of benevolence. They can and will give generously if an appeal strikes home, but they do not make an orderly allocation of surplus guineas in well considered precedence nor have they the smallest use for a Banker's Order. Thus most charities for the blind find that annual subscriptions are a diminishing factor in their income and that to secure a compensating increase in donations, recourse must be had to new and necessarily more

expensive methods. Funds are now reckoned as cheaply secured if only thirty per cent has to be deducted for expenses.

Such considerations are, however, of a technical nature. The bold outstanding feature of the situation is that from National, Local and charitable sources, the agencies for the blind are receiving a steadily increasing stream of financial support and every phase of the problem is advancing gradually to its adequate treatment and solution. It may be a fitting close to this survey of the slow growth of organised effort on behalf of the blind to look at the working of the intricate organisation that has now been built up as it comes to the aid of a blind person in the successive stages of his life.

Few children are born blind, but a heavy percentage still lose their sight in the first few days of life. Ophthalmia neonatorum is a disease which can be prevented from doing much damage to the eye if combatted in its early phases. It was added in 1914 to the list of compulsorily notifiable diseases and there is a further statutory obligation on midwives to report any case to a qualified medical practitioner. These two injunctions are devised to secure early skilled treatment and so eliminate as far as possible blindness from this source. If the machinery has been set to work too late for sight-saving and a blind infant is added to the population it is the business of the County Association to get into touch with the parents as soon as may be and to have the child added to its Register. In Scotland the Outdoor Mission is the appropriate body to secure

contact and it will be remembered that in that country the Register is kept centrally by the Board of Health. Regular visits by an experienced Home Teacher will be at once arranged and the mother given sound advice in the care of her child. If the home circumstances are undesirable the Association will seek to transfer the infant to one of the Sunshine Homes established and maintained by the National Institute for the Blind.

At the age of five admission to a School for Blind children must be sought. It is important that the Home Teacher should see that no time is lost in this important particular and that the Local Education Authority is persuaded to accept its share of responsibility directly school age is reached.

From five to sixteen years the blind child will receive a sound elementary education and during the closing years of this stage may spend a few hours weekly in training for the occupation at which it is hoped he will eventually earn his living. From sixteen to twenty this occupational training will take up most of his time, but more general studies with cultural value will not be entirely discarded.

On the completion of training it remains the duty of the appropriate Institution, usually the one which has provided the training, to find employment, either in a workshop or under a Home Workers' Scheme, for the competent young artisan or musician. By this means the blind man or woman will be enabled to support himself, in some cases partially and in most wholly,

and so will take his rightful place as a self-respecting member of the community.

To the man or woman to whom loss of sight comes in middle life there should speedily arrive the ministrations of the Home Teacher with invaluable consolation and advice. The road to training and employment is again made open and in a few years the man on whom the curtain of life-long darkness fell with a numbing horror worse than sentence of death may be heard singing at his work.

Blindness is a heavy handicap and even with all the assistance, both State and Charitable, both paid and voluntary, that is ready to be placed at his disposal, the blind citizen who makes good is one of whom the country should be proud. He who conquers such a disability has helped to raise the stature of humanity and has contributed living evidence to the dominance of mind over matter. He who endures the rayless blackness and in many cheerfulness keeps his heart warm and his muscles taut is one who can sing with Henley in simple honesty and without suspicion of bravado

"I thank whatever gods there be
For my unconquerable soul."

APPENDIX I

Institutions from 1800 to 1850.

Norwich.

In 1805 Thomas Tawell a well-to-do citizen of Norwich, who like Rushton of Liverpool had been blind and had recovered some of his sight, founded in his own town an Asylum and School. He was successful in securing municipal support and he himself gave liberally of his own time and money. As the name indicates the Institution comprised two sections, one for pupils and one for the aged blind. The pupils received both elementary education and trade instruction while the Asylum inmates were expected to work in return for their maintenance. The number of pupils was never to exceed twice the number of old people and this proportion seems to have been generally maintained. The initial number was 14 which by 1841 had risen to 49, of whom 34 were pupils. The age of admission was at first 12, but this was later reduced to 10 the favourite starting point in those days. The elementary work was altogether given up in 1901 and the Institution is now like Nottingham and others limited to technical instruction and employment.

Glasgow.

The Institution at Glasgow was not founded till 1825, though the initial money for its founding had been bequeathed twenty years earlier. When it did start it made an ambitious beginning with a special Act of Parliament and strong municipal

support. It acquired buildings with two acres of land in a central position and comprised an elementary school, a training centre and workshops for adults. One praiseworthy and exceptional feature in its programme was that from the first it found employment for all whom it trained if they were capable and well behaved. The School was a residential one and there was no Asylum for the aged blind.

York.

The School at York was opened in 1835 as a memorial to William Wilberforce. The Committee secured the tenancy of a historic building known as the King's Manor which had first been the house of the Abbot of St.Mary's Abbey and later the official residence of the President of the Council of the North. It continued to be so used till the Council was abolished in 1641. The School gave elementary education, industrial training and had workshops attached in which employment was provided.

London.

The School, now best known from its address at Swiss Cottage, was started in 1838 as The London Society for Teaching the Blind to read "in accordance with the principles of Mr. Lucas's system." Thomas M. Lucas was a citizen of Bristol who had invented a stenographic system of embossed type and who in 1830 had opened a small School for a few blind children in his own town. In 1837 he came to London to gain further adherents to his system. He was then an old man of 73 and the strain of his new propagandist labours coupled with the worry of a

fierce controversy with Frere proved too much for his strength and he died in the same year. Thus he himself did not see the founding of the Society, but his enthusiasm and conviction were contagious and were worthily maintained by those who took up the task of making his system a universal medium for the blind. Their programme was threefold, first the creation of a Metropolitan School, second, the establishment of branch Schools throughout the Country and, third, the printing and dissemination of books in Lucas type. The energy with which they carried out their purpose was remarkable and their labours had a great influence on the development of educational establishments for the blind before the middle of the century. Indeed, although his work was largely posthumous, Lucas is entitled to rank with Taylor, Alston and Armitage as one of the foremost pioneers in the advancement of the lot of the blind.

The Metropolitan School was opened in Bloomsbury and in 1848 moved to its present headquarters at Hampstead. At the outset its pupils stayed normally for six months which was judged sufficient to acquire mastery of the system, but this was soon abandoned. Also before many years had passed other subjects were added to the elementary curriculum, training in industrial subjects was introduced and the School came into line with the Institutions for the Blind of its day. It made, however, no provision for employment, at least within its own walls.

In accordance with its programme it encouraged the establishment of branch Schools and by 1841 had seen classes

opened in Exeter, Bath, Nottingham, Leamington and Plymouth. Several of these faded away in a few years, but it may be noted that when Plymouth started its own Institution in 1858 its instruction in reading was by means of Lucas.

Exeter.

The Institution at Exeter was opened only a few months later than its parent organisation. From the outset the teaching of reading was combined with training in one or other of the customary handicrafts, basket-making, chair-caning, knitting, netting, etc. In 1840, a spinning wheel was purchased presumably as an additional occupation. The leading spirit in these early years was a Mrs. Friend who continued her control and influence until her death in 1875. The School moved to its present address at St.David's Hill in 1843 but like most other Institutions numerous changes and extensions have taken place since then. The School began as a day centre but by 1855 it had sleeping accommodation for 20 boys and dormitories for girls were added later.

Newcastle.

The early career of the Institution at Newcastle was marred by contention. A start was made early in 1838 with a body known as The Asylum for the Blind of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and for the counties of Northumberland and Durham, but a dispute arose as to the details of the religious instruction to be imparted and in the month of June of the same year a rival organisation took the field. Just a fortnight later a third Society was brought into being in the hope that it might

induce the contestants to unite with it and so with one another. Fusion with the original body was secured, but the second proved intransigeant until 1848 when the lapse of time had blunted the edge of controversy. The principal Institution was known as the Royal Victoria Asylum for the Industrious Blind. Its functions were the usual combination of education and training. In its early years it also gave employment to the older blind and considerable sales were effected of goods made by workers and pupils. In 1849 through mistaken ideas of economy employment was jettisoned and when in 1867workshops were established they were carried on under separate management.

The functions of this and many others of these early Institutions could not be more clearly put than in the words of the record of the first quarterly meeting of subscribers held 1st May, 1838. "The object is to afford to the indigent blind a religious, moral and elementary education founded on Scriptural principles and to teach them such trades as are suitable to their capacities."

Manchester.

The foundation stone of the Manchester Institution was laid in 1835 and the building was opened in 1839. A large sum had been left in 1810 by Thomas Henshaw of Oldham as an endowment fund but the Will was contested and the Court of Chancery took twenty years to decide that the bequest was valid. The public, too, were slow to make the necessary contributions for land and buildings so that Henshaw had been dead for thirty years before his generous gift now swollen by interest to

£50,000 was put to use.

At the outset it attempted no elementary education but limited its activities to industrial training and the provision of employment to the poor and infirm blind whom it housed. In 1864 only seven of the seventy inmates were under the age of 14.

Nottingham.

The Institution at Nottingham was founded in 1843. Although begun for the instruction of the blind in Lucas type under the aegis of the London Society it early broke away from any links with London. From the first it was intended to serve a wider area than that of the town. Its name was the Midland Institution and it drew its pupils, Subscriptions and Committee from the five Counties of Nottingham, Leicester, Derby, Lincoln and Rutland. This district it still serves with the exception of Leicester and Rutland which opened Workshops of their own in 1859. As in the case of Bristol the initial efforts were made by one or two Members of the Society of Friends. The object of the foundation was to give a "plain and useful education" but from the outset industrial training and the manufacture of goods for sale seem to have formed parts of the scheme. The extent of the accommodation in its first quarters was seven boarders and eleven day pupils. In a dozen years the numbers had increased to thirty-eight boarders and fifteen day pupils. The usual industries were taught but it is an interesting feature that most of the Workshops in these early days leaned most heavily on one particular occupation. Thus Bristol was

strongest in baskets, St.George's in mats, Glasgow in mattress making and Nottingham in brushes. Another point worthy of attention is that those Institutions which admitted children agreed on ten years as being the lowest age for practicable tuition. Elementary education was given up by the Nottingham Institution in 1901.

Birmingham.

Many of the agencies for the blind grew from small beginnings, but none exemplify this growth more clearly than the great Institution at Birmingham. Like the School at Nottingham it began as a branch of The London Society and its main purpose was the instruction of pupils in the Lucas system. As the Report of the Society for 1847 proudly remarks "The commencement of a School for the Blind in the centre of that densely populated district is a most important advance of the system." To begin with, the number of pupils was seven, but this number rapidly increased and several changes of address were necessitated before a permanent habitation was built in Carpenter Road, Edgbaston. This was in 1851 and by that time the Institution had outgrown its initial stage of being a dame's School and was a flourishing enterprise with large private and municipal support. Its purpose was to instruct the blind in the Holy Scriptures and to impart training in some trade by which they could contribute to their own livelihood. One unusual feature was the appointment in 1854 of an outdoor instructor whose function it was to give training to the blind in their own homes. Soon after the middle of the

century the School began to win deserved credit for its choir work and for the qualified organists whom it sent out.

In Ireland four Institutions were set on foot before 1850. Two Asylums were opened in Dublin, The Richmond National Institution for the Blind (Protestant) in 1810 and The Molyneux Asylum (Catholic) in 1815. The Ulster Society for promoting the education of the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind opened a School in Belfast in 1831 and The Cork Asylum was started in 1843.

The mention of three more British Institutions makes the tale complete. In 1812 an Asylum for the Blind was opened in Aberdeen, in 1841 a Catholic Blind Asylum began its labours at Brunswick Road, Liverpool, and in 1842 an Asylum for the Instruction of the Blind saw the light in Brighton.

To this brief survey of the early British Institutions may be added a note on the three earliest schools of America. The first was designed in 1829 by John D. Fisher for the Blind children of New England, but was not opened till 1832 when Dr. Samuel Grinlay Howe gathered together six pupils in Boston. In the following year the school was removed to the house of Thomas Handasyd Perkins in Pearl Street and from there in 1839 to Mount Washington House, South Boston. In 1912 it was moved to spacious new buildings and grounds in the suburb of Watertown and is now known as the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind.

The education of blind children in Philadelphia was begun in 1832 when Junius Friedlander undertook the training

of two pupils in his own house and at his own expense. From this experiment arose in the following year The Pennsylvania Institution with Mr. Friedlander as its first Principal. In 1834 the school was moved to larger premises and again in 1836. There the work was carried on for sixty-three years until in 1899 it was transferred to its present site in Sixty-fourth Street.

In 1832 Dr. Samuel Akerly and Mr. William Wood secured the voluntary services of a young physician Dr. John D. Russ as teacher to three blind orphan boys in the city of New York. Two small rooms were rented in Canal Street, but in a few months the infant organisation had to seek larger accommodation in Mercer Street. In the next year it moved to Thirty-fourth Street. Here a new building was erected in 1837-42 and housed the Institution till 1924 when it was transferred to Pelham Parkway. Dr. Russ was in office for less than three years and was followed by half a dozen short term Principals until in 1859 William B. Wait began a connection with the school which lasted till his death fifty-seven years later.

These three schools are typical of the American system in that they are now purely educational establishments although in their early days they made some half-hearted attempts at industrial training and employment.

The early years of the nineteenth century saw many schools spring up on the Continent of Eurppe. In 1804 one was opened in Vienna and in 1806 one at Steglitz near Berlin. In

1807 two Institutions saw the light, one at St.Petersburg founded by Valentin Hauy and the other at Dresden made familiar to British workers by Dr. Armitage's warm advocacy of its methods in dealing with its former pupils. 1808 was a fruitful year and saw the opening of schools at Amsterdam, Prague and Stockholm. In 1811 Copenhagen joined the list of pioneer Institutions.